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THE BAB-EN-NASR, THE OLD GATE OF VICTORY BUILT BY SALADIN.

*[Frontispiece.]*



# ORIENTAL CAIRO

THE CITY OF THE "ARABIAN NIGHTS".

By

DOUGLAS SLADEN

AUTHOR OF

"QUEER THINGS ABOUT EGYPT", "EGYPT AND THE ENGLISH"  
"THE TRAGEDY OF THE PYRAMIDS", "THE SECRETS OF  
THE VATICAN", "THE JAPS AT HOME", "QUEER  
THINGS ABOUT JAPAN," ETC. ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH  
*SIXTY-THREE INTIMATE PICTURES OF LIFE IN ORIENTAL  
CAIRO FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR, AND WITH  
THE NEWEST MAP OF CAIRO*

London

HURST & BLACKETT, LTD.

PATERNOSTER HOUSE, E.C.

1911



DEDICATED,  
IN MEMORY OF DAYS SPENT IN ITALY TOGETHER,  
TO MY OLD FRIENDS  
MR. AND MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON,  
WHOSE NOVELS OF TRAVEL,  
IN THE WAKE OF THE FAMOUS "LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR,"  
HAVE REACHED EVERY CORNER OF THE  
CIVILISED WORLD



## PREFACE

I HAVE to thank my friend Stanley Lane-Poole, Professor of Arabic at Trinity College, Dublin, and Messrs. J. M. Dent & Co., for the permission to print at the end of my book Prof. Lane-Poole's admirable Chronological Table of the Rulers and Monuments of Mediæval Cairo which appeared in his indispensable little volume, *The Story of Cairo* in Dent's Mediæval Towns Series. It will be found most useful, because it gives a summary of the chief mediæval buildings of Cairo.

The list of Artists' Bits in Cairo, with directions how to find them, on p. 361, will, I hope, be found helpful by painters and the great army of kodakers. The illustrations for this book are all of them enlargements of photographs taken by myself with a No. 1a folding kodak.

And many people will, I think, be grateful for my pointing out to them the new facilities for getting to Egypt afforded by the combination of Thomas Cook & Son with the P. and O. Company, which I have tabulated on p. 351.

The types described in my various chapters on street life in Cairo are depicted inimitably in Mr. Lance Thackeray's new book, *The People of Egypt*, published by A. & C. Black, too late for me to mention it in the text of my book. They could not have fitted my text more completely if they had been executed for it. No one ever caught the humours of the Egyptian life so faithfully as Mr. Thackeray, and now

we have him in the streets of Cairo as we had him before in Upper Egypt.

The water-carrier, the arbaghi who drives your cab, the policeman, the Egyptian boy, the peep-show man, the sellers of cakes and vegetables and syrups, the boy with the monkey, the donkey-boy, the dragoman, and many others, with just the sort of tourists looking at them who would be looking at them, and the scenery of time-worn Cairo in the background—they are all there, painted in the most life-like colours, and with a wonderful intuition, into form and expression.

I have to thank Miss Margaret Thomas, the well-known writer upon Syria, for compiling the index.

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ARABS LUNCHING IN THE ATABA-EL-KHADRA, THE SQUARE WHERE NEARLY ALL THE TRAMS IN CAIRO START.

Observe in the foreground a boy selling rings of bread, and a man in the ordinary dress of the Arab town labourer. The carriage is one of the victorias drawn usually by two white Arabs, which are called *arabehs*, and constitute the cabs of Cairo.



NATIVE 'BUS OF THE MORE REFINED KIND, DRAWN BY TWO ASSES, IN THE  
ATABA-EI-KHADRA



# ORIENTAL CAIRO

## THE CITY OF THE "ARABIAN NIGHTS"

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### TO THE READER

WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED OF HER DEFORMED CHILDREN is the reflection, with which I console myself when I am scolded by critics, chiefly in superior papers, for the views I have expressed about Egyptians.

A very great paper—I think it must have been *The Daily News*—scolded me dreadfully for giving absurd examples in my *Queer Things About Egypt*, of "English as she is wrote by the Egyptians." How, it asked, would Mr. Sladen like his own mistakes in Italian to be held up for ridicule?

To show how glad I should be to provide innocent amusement in this way I will tell a story against myself which has never appeared in print.

The padrone of a hotel in Sicily, to which I was in the habit of going, was a handsome young engineer who was notorious for his conquests among the fair sex. His wife, who was very devoted to him, met me at the door on my return to their hotel after an absence of some years. When I had asked about her own health, I continued, "And how is your husband, the *Ingannatore*?" I could not have said a more unfortunate thing, for *Ingannatore* means not an *engineer* but a *deceiver*. I should have said *Ingegnere*. The lady coloured painfully, but she knew what I meant and was equal to the occasion.

After this I hope that in a book, which has the saving grace of making no political comment upon Egyptians, I may be allowed to print a bouquet of the finest flowers of Egyptian English which have ever been collected on one sheet of notepaper. It was addressed to the Secretary of one of the most important companies in Cairo, who vouches for the authenticity of the entire document.

RESPECTFULLY HEREWITH,

That your honour's servant is poor man in agricultural behaviour which depends on season for the staff of life, therefore he proposes that you will be pitiful upon and take him into your sacred service, that he may have some permanent labour for the support of his soul and family. Whereupon he falls upon his family's bended knees, and implores to you on your merciful consideration to a damnable miserable like your honour's unfortunate petitioner.

That Your Lordship's honour's servant was too much poorly during the last years and was resuscitated by much medicines which made magnificent excavations in coffers of your honourable servant whose means are circumcised by his large family consisting of five female women and three masculines, the last of which are still taking milk from mother's chest, and are damnable noisy through pulmonary catastrophe in their interior abdomens besides the above named an additional birth is through the grace of God shortly coming to my beloved of bosom.

That your honour's damnable servant was officiating in several passages during all his generations becoming too much old for absorbing hard labour in this time of faded life, but was not drunkard nor fornicator nor thief nor swindler nor any of this kind but was always pious, affectionate to his numerous family consisting of the aforesaid five female women and three males the last of whom are still milking the parental mother.

That your Gracious honour's Lordship's servant was entreated to the Magistrate for employment in Municipality to remove filth etc., but was not granted the petition; therefore

your Generous Lordship will give me some easy work in the department or something of this sort apart which act of kindness your honourable lordship's servant will as in duty bound pray for your longevity and procreativity

I have etc.

Having made this protest I will not detain the reader with further examples, but proceed to set forth my reason for writing yet another book upon Egypt.

Egypt is an inexhaustible subject. When I saw that if I included in my *Queer Things About Egypt* the chapters I was preparing upon the glorious mediæval Arab city at Cairo and its unspoiled native life, half the book would have to be devoted to them, I decided to omit the descriptions of Oriental Cairo altogether and to make them the subject of a separate book.

I was confirmed in this intention by the fact that nine out of ten English visitors who go to Egypt spend their entire time in Cairo and its vicinity. A book on Oriental Cairo seemed badly wanted, for there has been no adequate book which attempted to conduct the reader round the sights of the native city,<sup>1</sup> and the innumerable monuments of mediæval Arab architecture, which were in existence in Cairo when it supplied the local colour for the *Arabian Nights*, and still exist. It is computed that of ancient mosques and shrines alone there are nearly five hundred.

Few visitors to Cairo ever see them, and I felt that there were many who would love to wander about them if they had their attention drawn to them in a chatty and interesting book. This is what I have tried to achieve in my "Oriental Cairo, the City of the *Arabian Nights*."

It is the custom of the swallows of London Society, who go to Cairo for the season, and spend their entire time between the hotels, the Turf Club, and Ghezira, to complain that Cairo is almost as European as London or Paris. You would gather from their conversation that the one thing they really yearned for in Egypt was to see unspoiled native life, and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lane-Poole's "*The Story of Cairo*" is historical rather than topographical.

that Cairo was inhabited entirely by the unlovely *effendi* in his cheap, ill-fitting parodies of European clothes tempered by the use of a *tarbûsh*.

But beyond the excursion with a dragoman to the Turkish Bazar they never think of going into the native city, which is as Oriental as Granada was in the days of the Moors, and not totally different to the Baghdad of the *Arabian Nights*.

It was as a city which still maintains the atmosphere of the *Arabian Nights* that Cairo appealed most to me; and while I was there I converted here a gay officer, there a society butterfly into an ardent mosque-hunter or an enthusiastic observer of the mediæval life in the Arab city.

The kodak certainly played no small part in the conversion of most of them, for there are few well-off people who go to Egypt without a camera, and they were fascinated with the photographs I took for the production of the illustrations of this book. When my converts were once bitten with the mania for photographing in the Arab city, they generally went there every day, regardless of the bargaining in the bazars and the fleas of the Market of the Afternoon.

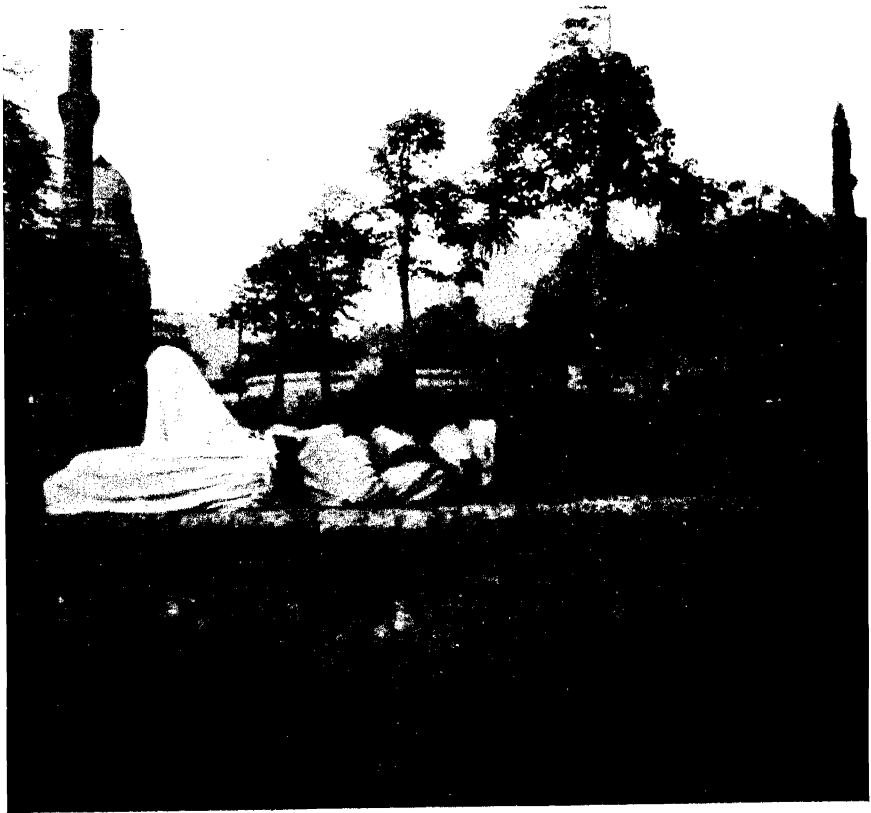
I often had to go alone when I had exhausted the enthusiasms or the muscles of all my friends. But I never felt lonely, even if I was in the wrong part of the city for Ali my faithful guide to find me and accompany me. Nothing could induce Ali to come to the hotel for me when I wanted him in some other direction than the Babes-Zuweyla. Two or three times he made appointments to come when I pressed him. But as he never kept them I understood that he had some reason, which he would not disclose, for objecting, such as Ramidge's servant had against taking him to a native theatre.

But I never, if I could help it, went inside a mosque alone. It was so difficult to get any atmosphere without the sympathetic society of others interested in its art and its romance. The attendants and the worshippers in the mosques never seem to think about these aspects. To them, even a mosque like El-Merdani is nothing but a place of



THE SŪK-EN-NAHASSIN.

The most beautiful, romantic, and medieval street in Cairo, with the most exquisite street fountain in Cairo at its end. Left and right are *meshrebiya*-latticed Orics. In front are a forage-seller and a bread-seller.



THE OCCUPATION OF EGYPT—SLEEPING.

The Egyptian has a genius for going to sleep at unreasonable hours in the most unsuitable places. This man was lying asleep, with one knee in the air, on the top of a narrow parapet in the Place Mohammed Ali, near the Market of the Afternoon.

worship and a club, a building in which they could not understand a Christian's wishing to enter for any purpose except the assertion of the right to intrude. Yet the mosques of Cairo are among the flowers of the earth. They are as rich in colour and variety as the blossoms of the garden and the field. They look as if they might have been grown and not been built by hands; they are full of fine curves and gracious flourishes; and all through the Arab city they spring beside one's path.

I do not know how many mosques I have entered and perused in Cairo. It must be fifty, it may be a hundred or two hundred. I know them as familiarly as men and women. I scan their gentle and lovable features like the faces of friends. They seem to pass the time of day to me whenever I am in their neighbourhood.

Few types of the world's architecture are as irrespective of age as the mosques of Cairo. I know mosques that were building when Louis Quinze was king, in the golden sunset of France, which look as old as fifteenth-century Gothic. The mosque builders did not lose their grip of style, their ideals did not fail. The mosque of El-Bordeini has not lost the magic of Kait Bey's architecture, though it was built two centuries later. It may justly be compared to the delightful Stuart Gothic at Oxford, built two centuries after mediæval Gothic passed with the feudal chivalry of England in the Wars of the Roses. In the array of mosques marshalled before the eyes of the observer in Cairo, he can compare the glories of a thousand years.

In El-Azhar itself, the University of the Mohammedan world, there are inscriptions that declare the handiwork of Gohar, the General of the Fatimides who conquered Egypt, and, listening to the crafty son of Tallis, founded the Oxford of the East ten stormy centuries ago.

The mosque of El-Amr is almost as old as Islam itself, though hardly one of Amr's stones is standing on another, and the stately colonnades of its fifteenth-century restorer are half of them lying, like images of the Pharaohs, in the sand.

The minarets of El-Hakim, another of the primitive mosques, rise like the pylons of Edfu in the midst of mediæval Cairo. They have the solid simplicity of the temples of ancient Egypt; and religion has left them as lonely. No pageant of faith ever brightens the *liwân* of El-Hakim's mosque. For a while, as a museum, it was the shrine of Arabian art, now it is but the storehouse of the great old-fashioned lanterns used in the illuminations of the Faithful. But it keeps company worthily with the Gate of Victory and the Gate of Conquests and city walls as old as our Norman castles.

Ibn-Tulun's mosque is tremendous; its huge courts, the grandest spaces in Cairo, are a thousand years old as they stand. The story of its building is a romance. The plaster tracery of its innumerable windows is still unmatched. It was the Court mosque of a more ancient Cairo. It has walls beside it which belonged to its luxurious founder's Palace of the Air.

I will not unfold here the glories of the great mosques of the later Middle Ages, Sultan Hassan's (the St. Peter's of Islam), Sultan Kalaun's (the St. Mark's), El-Moayyad, El-Merdani, El-Mase, the Blue Mosque, Sultan Barkuk's, El-Ghury, Abu Bekr's, El-Chikkun, Kïsmas-el-Ishaky, Kait Bey's, Sultan Selim's, El-Bordeini, and Sitt' Safiya—all but the last two built, and in their full splendour, when the world's chief romance was crystallised into a volume of *Arabian Nights* with the colour of Cairo.

I have written enough of them, I hope, in this volume, to make the reader, who visits Cairo with the desire to explore the mediæval Arabic city, leave not one of them unentered.

From my pages, too, he will gather that the Cairo of the *Arabian Nights* does not live by mosques alone, but by palaces of Caliphs, and mansions of Mameluke Beys, and ancient schools and fountains reared by both, in the munificent spirit of Mohammedan charity, in the centuries which filled Europe with her Gothic churches and convents and colleges.

In Cairo there are still whole mediæval streets in which huge oriel windows, latticed with exquisite *meshrebiya*-work,



rise in triple tiers on both sides of the road, each tier projecting over the tier below, till the sky threatens to vanish. The Gamaliya has ancient overhanging timber porches which would grace a Japanese temple. The Sukkariya and the streets which continue it are as fantastic as a willow-pattern plate, with their arcaded fountains and Koran schools of bygone centuries. The Bab-es-Zuweyla, crowned with flamboyant minarets, hung with the weapons of still credited giants, fluttering with the offerings of the Faithful, hardly ever without a ragged water-seller at its threshold and a *fikee* reciting the Koran in its dark recesses, is mediæval enough for a background for Saladin prancing out with his emirs to do battle with the Crusaders.

But this is only the half ; for though there is no longer the pomp of princes and nobles in the splendour of Oriental luxury or barbaric mail, the great religious pageants, like the celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet and the Procession of the Holy Carpet to Mecca, are celebrated with much of their ancient grandeur, and the life of the poor in the unspoiled parts of the native city is hardly changed from the days of the Caliphs, except for the intrusion of the gifts of science and of the protecting arm of the beneficent Power, which decrees that none shall suffer violence to his person or his goods save in the execution of righteously administered laws. Half a mile of streets is still festooned with red and white pennons and lanterns to welcome a pilgrim from Mecca or a marriage cortège, each heralded by bands of barbaric music, camels in scarlet caparisons, palanquins of ivory and silver, and a troop of friends riding on fine white asses.

As you are watching the coppersmith holding a beaten vessel with his toes while he chases the brim, or a silk-weaver buried to his middle, you may hear those barbaric hautboys and drums. But more often you will hear a chanting so mournful and dignified that its memory will stay in your ears for ever ; and soon, borne on the shoulders of friends, foreshadowed by banners, a high-horned coffin strewn with a noble shawl crosses your vision to the last rest in the Eastern desert.

On every side the poor are working patiently for the little gains of the Orient with tools unchanged from the dawn of commerce. The wood-turner, who creates the exquisite *meshrebiya* lattices, has a loose-strung bow for his lathe; the cotton-carder flicks the down from the fibre with a *fainéant* lute; the tarbûsh-maker does his felting with teasels from the hedge. This is the city of the *Arabian Nights*.

## II

### CAIRO THE SCENE OF THE "ARABIAN NIGHTS"

To avoid being taken to task for calling Cairo "A city of the *Arabian Nights*," I shall shelter myself behind the authority of the two most eminent writers in our language on Arabic Egypt. I refer, of course, to Edward Lane, whose translation of the *Arabian Nights* is, after the Bible, perhaps the greatest "foreign classic," and to his nephew, Stanley Lane-Poole, whom I am proud to remember as one of my literary friends at Oxford. He was a recognised authority on the subject even when he was an undergraduate, and it was he who first brought home to me how extraordinarily romantic is the art of the Saracen.

Since then I have been enraptured with it, face to face, in three continents and many lands, and have turned to his writings for fresh inspiration times literally without number.

From the passage which I quote in the Appendix from Lane it will be seen that it was sixteenth-century Cairo which supplied the local colour of the *Arabian Nights*, though the stories themselves have some of them been in existence for centuries longer, and some of them are not Arab at all.

No one who means to study Oriental Cairo seriously should go there without the three precious volumes of Lane's *Arabian Nights* (published by Chatto & Windus). Its notes throw a direct light on the Arabic Cairo of to-day, and it clothes with life a multitude of grand old mosques and palaces, neglected, decayed, or in ruins, by showing the tragedies and comedies and everyday existence which went on in them 350 years ago.



OUTSIDE THE CAIRO RAILWAY STATION THE UNEMPLOYED—DONKEYS AND DONKEY-BOYS.



CASTING HIS EYE A LITTLE COMEDY OUTSIDE THE RAILWAY STATION AT CAIRO.

Read Lane's *Arabian Nights*, and Lane's *Modern Egyptians* through before you go, and you will dip into them every day while you are there to corroborate from your own observations the lessons which you have laid to heart.

The books which deal most directly with mediæval Cairo itself are of course Mr. Lane-Poole's two books—*Cairo* and *The Story of Cairo*, the latter improved upon the former.

Until quite recently there was no other book to be mentioned beside them, but only a few years ago Messrs. Chatto & Windus brought out a volume, with coloured illustrations, on Cairo, Jerusalem, and Damascus by one of the greatest scholars Oxford has ever produced—Professor Margoliouth. This threw a quantity of new light on the subject by laying under contribution in the most critical manner the Arab historians and topographers. I feel myself, however, amply sheltered behind the names of Lane and Lane-Poole in calling Cairo *The City of the Arabian Nights*.

Mr. Lane-Poole uses the actual words in the passage which I have quoted in my Appendix. He says: "Cairo is still to a great degree the City of the *Arabian Nights*," and, in the second passage which I quote from him, gives a most brilliant description from the old Arabic chronicler El-Makrizy of the life led by the Mameluke Sultans and their Emirs, of their falconry, their racing, their polo, their archery, their brilliant festivals, their love of personal splendour.

I had this passage of Mr. Lane-Poole's in my mind when I used to wander off to muse at sunset among the Tombs of the Caliphs, or at night, when the bazars were deserted and the moon was high, to gaze upon the fairy lineaments of those three royal mosques in the Street of the Coppersmiths.

### III

#### THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOK

THE Introduction is followed by a preliminary chapter entitled "A Drive Round Cairo," which is intended for those who need to use the book as an itinerary. And this

is followed by a chapter of a general order on the Old-world Oriental Life of Cairo.

Chapters II—XII deal with the humours of street life, chiefly in the Arab city. The poor city Egyptian is as naive and amusing as the *fellah*. He gives the amateur photographer endless opportunities of securing humorous subjects. The chapters show explicitly where each kind of unspoiled native life is to be found.

Chapters XIII—XX deal with the incomparable mediæval monuments of the Arab city, which yield, to the student and the photographer alike, the noblest subjects.

Chapters XX, XXI, XXII, deal with the great religious processions; the Celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet, and the Procession of the Holy Carpet being two of the finest religious pageants in the Mohammedan world. Chapter XXIII deals with the extraordinarily interesting and highly mediæval domestic processions of the Arabs. Chapter XXIV summarises the marvellous monuments of ancient Egypt preserved in the Cairo Museum. Chapter XXV describes one of the ancient Arab Baths. Chapter XXVII the old Coptic Churches in Cairo; the remaining Chapters the Pyramids, the Sphinx, Memphis, Heliopolis, and other sights near Cairo. The Appendices give my authorities for calling Oriental Cairo the City of the *Arabian Nights*, Mr. Roosevelt's Guildhall speech, a chronological table, etc.

Though the book gives the necessary practical advice to sightseers in Cairo, it is as full of amusement for the general reader as *Queer Things About Egypt* was; the only difference being that it gives the humours of the poor natives in the city, with their taint of touting, instead of the unconscious humours of the *fellahin*.

DOUGLAS SLADEN.

32, ADDISON MANSIONS, KENSINGTON, W.,

January 1, 1911.



EGYPTIAN INFANTRY MARCHING. PAST.

Their uniforms are light blue and their *for bush*s (caps) are scarlet



THE EGYPTIAN CAVALRY BAND

There is only one native regiment of cavalry, kept chiefly for escorting the Khedive and his guests. They wear a very bright light-blue uniform.



# DIRECTIONS FOR A DRIVE ROUND CAIRO

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THE first thing to do when you get to any town that you wish to study is to take what the Italians call a drive of Orientation. The most convenient point to select for the centre of Cairo is the Place de l'Opéra between the

Opréa, the Hôtel Continental and the Esbekiya Gardens. It is not really so central as the Abdin Palace, geographically speaking, but it is at the crossing of the principal routes.

### I.—EUROPEANISED CAIRO.

#### I. The Ismailiya Quarter: the District of the Foreign Hotels, Shops, Business Offices, and Chief Residences

The first quarter of Cairo you drive round takes very little time; it is the smallest, bounded by the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, the Ismailiya Canal, and the Sharia Kamel, which changes its name to the Sharia Nubar Pasha as it approaches the railway station. This is the European business quarter. In it are situated the Cairo Head Offices of the Suez Canal Company, on the last named street; and the office of Thomas Cook & Son, Shepherd's Hotel and the Hôtel Continental on the Sharia Kamel. The Savoy Hotel, the Consulates General of France and Russia, and the three chief banks are all situated on or just off the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil; while the Turf Club, the Hôtel d'Angleterre, the British Consulate Offices, the English Church, and the Offices of the Eastern Telegraph Company are all situated in the centre of the block; and the Abbas Theatre, not very far behind Cook's Office. The best foreign shops are in the Sharia Kamel, the Sharia El-Maghrabi, the Sharia Manakh, the Sharia Bulak, and the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, all in this quarter, and most of the other foreign business houses are near them. In other words, this is the quarter of Cairo where most of the well-off foreigners live and move and do their shopping, called vaguely the Ismailiya quarter.

#### II. Route for Seeing the Ismailiya Quarter

The best way to see it in a carriage is to drive from the Sharia Kamel to the Sharia Suleiman Pasha down the Sharia Bulak and up the Sharia El-Maghradi, down the Sharia Manakh and up the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, finishing up with a

drive along the fine Sharia El-Madabegh, and a drive down the bottom part of the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil to see the Nile bridge, the Kasr-el-Nil barracks (which generally have soldiers drilling or playing on the parade ground), the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities and the Maison Zogheb, the finest modern private house in the city in the Arabic style. The only two buildings in the whole quarter which need be visited from the art point of view are the Museum and the Maison de France, the house of the French Consul-General, constructed out of the materials of old Arab houses and mosques.

### III. The Kasr-el-Dubara Quarter Sights

The second quarter to explore is not much more interesting. The most important part of it, from the point of view of the artist and the historian, is known as the Kasr-el-Dubara. This contains the houses of the British Consul-General and the British General Commanding the Army of Occupation; an English Church; the palace of the Imperial Ottoman Commissioner and the Khedive's mother, near the river; and near them the offices of the Minister of Public Works, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance and the Interior, and the War Office. On the other side of them, a little farther off, is the Abdin Palace, the principal residence of the Khedive, guarded by barracks.

This quarter may be said to begin at the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil and to end at the great Kasr-el-Aini Hospital on the Nile side, and the Mosque of Seyyida Zeynab on the inner side. It is not much more interesting than the Ismailiya quarter. More than half of the part of it on the river bank consists of grubbed-up gardens and foundations, a memento of the great land-boom, in which this was to have formed the most fashionable residential part of Cairo. The new Egyptian University is situated near the Ministry of War and the Wakfs, a handsome building, in which the administration of Mohammedan charities and the repair of Mohammedan monuments is vested. But none of the buildings are

worth a visit. They are merely handsome edifices in the style of French or English public buildings, which are surrounded with dull gardens. This is a portion of Cairo which the visitor may safely neglect. But it takes very little time to make your cabman drive round these public buildings of the Administration in the order in which I have given them.

I have taken these two quarters first, to get them out of the way before proceeding to the Arabic quarters centring round the Citadel, which fall into the natural scope of my book.

### II—ORIENTAL CAIRO

#### IV. From the Opera House round the Esbekiya Gardens to the Ataba-el-Khadra; Scenes of Native Life

Visitors wishing to drive round Oriental Cairo should start at the Place de l'Opéra, say, from the statue of Ibrahim Pasha, the famous fighting son of Mehemet Ali, who had so much to do with Egypt's throwing off the Ottoman yoke. Instead of driving direct to the Ataba-el-Khadra, the square from which nearly all the tramways of Cairo start, he should drive right round the Esbekiya Gardens, for in the road on the other side, called the Sharia El-Genaina, he will see much native life, the best donkey boys' restaurants, the best street stalls.

The Ataba-el-Khadra, in the angle of the Mixed Tribunals and the Post Office, is the best place to observe another kind of native life. The Arabs are extremely fond of using tramways and omnibuses, and take them as seriously as we take catching a train. As they are bustling-in they are waited on by a swarm of vendors of tartlets, Turkish delight, seditious newspapers, and tinkery and turnery, not to mention the swarm of water-sellers, lemonade-sellers and shoeblacks, or the donkey-boys and the arabeah-drivers, who deafen you with their noise, and the forage camels and stone-carts who jostle into everybody.

## V. The Sharia Mohammed Ali; Native Life of the Bab-el-Khalk; the Approach to the Bab-es-Zuweyla by the Oriental Taht-er-Reba'a and its Mosques

At the far corner of the Ataba-el-Khadra there is a long straight street called the Sharia Mohammed Ali, which goes right down to the Citadel and affords a splendid view of it. Drive down this as far as the Place Bab-el-Khalk, on which stand the handsome Saracenic building of the Arabic Museum, and the Governorat and office of the Commissioner of the Police, where you are apt to see interesting groups of bound prisoners being brought in, and of natives hanging about to have a case tried. From this point you begin to strike the real native town, if you drive down the little street called the Sharia Taht-er-Reba'a, for it takes you past charming little old mosques and schools and purely native shops, chiefly carpenters', to the Bab-es-Zuweyla, which is always considered the centre of the native city. Just before you get to it you have on one side, approached by a stairway under a house, the little Blue Mosque, and on the other side, the great mosque of El-Moayad. You can see the old blue tiles which cover the façade of the former gleaming under the archway as you pass down the street. It belongs to Dervishes, and is unlike anything else in Cairo. El-Moayad is one of the chief mosques of Cairo, and one of the best restored; its two soaring and fantastic minarets are built on to the towers of the Bab-es-Zuweyla, which is one of the three old gates of Cairo, and owes its inimitable picturesqueness to them.

## VL The Drive through the City of the Caliphs from the Bab-es-Zuweyla to the Bab-el-Futuh

The portion of Cairo which lies south and north between the Bab-es-Zuweyla Gate and the Bab-en-Nasr, between the El-Moayad Mosque and the El-Hakim Mosque, and west and east between the line of the old canal and the Tombs of the Caliphs is far the most picturesque part of Cairo, and on the north, south, and east sides it occupies almost exactly

the site of the original city of El-Kahira. If you drive in a straight line down the street, which changes its name thirteen times between this gate and the Bab-el-Futuh, the gate on the other side of the city, you will pass some of the noblest, most ancient, and most beautiful mosques in the world, such as El-Moayad, El-Ghuri, El-Ashraf, Sultan Kalaun, Sultan-en-Nasir and El-Hakim, not to mention smaller mosques, which are gems, and fountains like the Sebil Abd-er-Rahman, and the Sheikh's house next to the Barkukiya. I only give the names of the buildings which are still perfect, but the mosques, and palaces, and baths, and fountains, which are falling into decay along this street have a pathetic and artistic beauty of their own.

## VII. Mohammedan Funerals

I consider this the most wonderful street I have ever been in, and there is much native life in it, due not a little to the fact that it is one of the principal routes for the solemn and picturesque Mohammedan funerals. You hear the death chant, and soon there comes into view a little procession headed by religious banners and closed by a horned coffin covered with a pall of brocade borne high on the shoulders of the mourners, who surround it, and take their turn in the work of merit. Sometimes there will be a bread camel, or students of El-Azhar carrying a Koran upon a cushion, or *fikees* reciting. But in principle it is always the same—a little foot procession of men wearing their ordinary dress surrounding the picturesque coffin, and preceded by banners and chanting.

•

## VIII. Saladin's Gates and Walls

The great mosque of El-Hakim stands between the Bab-el-Futuh and the Bab-en-Nasr, the two oldest gates of Cairo, *chefs d'œuvres* of the military architecture of the Saracens, hardly altered in their outward guise since Saladin himself rode out of them to fight the Crusaders, and flanked by

a splendid stretch of the most ancient wall of Cairo full of towers and secret passages.

### IX. The Gamaliya and the Palace of Sultan Beybars

Drive out of the Bab-el-Futuh yourself and into the Bab-en-Nasr. You come almost immediately, on the right, to an important building, a ruined *okelle* of Kait Bey, and almost immediately you are in the Gamaliya, the chief Arab street of Cairo, between the Mosque and Palace of Sultan Beybars. The mosque is ancient, but it is duly restored ; the palace, which you approach through a gate off the main street, in the little lane called the Darb-el-Asfar, is the finest domestic building in Cairo, the residence of a rich Turk, who preserves it hardly altered and appropriately furnished.

### X. The Mameluke Houses of the Gamaliya Quarter

There are other great mosques in the Gamaliya, but they are more or less in ruins, and nearly all the princely *khans* of the Red Sea merchants, which line this famous street, have been spoiled by being cut up into offices. But many of them have fine antique bits preserved, and, as you pass out of this street into the Sharia Habs-el-Rahba, which is a continuation of it, you come upon a stretch of street architecture difficult to match in the world. Not only the main street itself, but the by-streets running off it, are full of tall mameluke palaces, which stretch farther and farther over the street, as their stories rise, until you can hardly see the sky between them, at the top. The upper stories are full of huge oriel windows covered with lattices of rich and ancient *meshrebiya* work for the use of the ladies of the harem, while the lower portions have splendid overhanging porches. Windows and walls and doors all being of wood-work, have warped to every angle of picturesqueness and taken the colour of Rome. The old wood-work of the mameluke houses can best be seen in these streets ; the stone-work is better seen farther on.



## XI. The Hill of the Beit-el-Kadi and its glorious Architecture

From here you drive through a most impressive old gateway to one of the most favoured squares of Cairo, which has the five superb arches of the Beit-el-Kadi, the old palace of the Grand Kadi, on the left, and the mosque and the equally ancient hospital of Sultan Kalaun in front. The façade of Sultan Kalaun's mosque is Gothic in its richness.

## XII. The Turkish Bazar and the Mosque of Hoseyn

Between the Beit-el-Kadi and the continuation of the Muski called the Sikket-el-Gedida is the only bit of the native city which most foreigners know at all familiarly, the Khan-el-Khalil, which most of it is taken up with the so-called Turkish Bazar. This, with the exception of a handsome *khan* built by Ismail Pasha, is more European than Arab, full of the stalls of the dealers in precious stones (chiefly turquoises), lace, pottery, enamels, carpets, and brass, and very appropriately has at the back of it the mosque of Hoseyn, which looks as if it had been furnished from the Tottenham Court Road, though it is deemed too sacred for Christians to enter its door.

## XIII. The University of El-Azhar and the Okelle of Kait Bey

Just across the Sikket-el-Gedida is the gigantic and famous mosque of El-Azhar, the chief University of Islam, only picturesque outside for its six mad minarets, but full of venerable beauty in its great *liwān* crowded with ten thousand students. Beside it are the mosque of Mohammed Bey and the *okelle* of Kait Bey, which must be inspected, the former for the exquisite *meshrebiya* pavilion over its fountain, the latter because it has the finest mameluke façade of any mansion in Cairo. It is almost as handsome and as much decorated as a great mosque, with its splendid porch and windows and panellings.

#### XIV. The Beit-Gamal-ed-Din

From here tell the cabman to drive to the Beit-Gamal-ed-Din in the Sharia Hoche Kadam, the house built for the chief of the merchants in the bazar a little before 1650, which the Wakfs have put into thorough order for exhibition to the public, with a caretaker at the door to demand mosque tickets for admission. This is a beautiful, perfect, and very richly decorated building, only inferior to the Palace of the Sultan Beybars.

#### XV. The Coptic Churches of the Bazar; the best Bazars

While you are in this neighbourhood tell the cabman to drive to the two antique Coptic churches—which are quite near, in a little back street called the Haret-er-Rum on the same side of the Sharia El-Akkadin, one of which is dedicated to St. George, and the other to the Virgin—if you are going to make a study of Coptic churches. Then turn back into the Sharia El-Akkadin, and, sending your carriage round to meet you in the Sikket-el-Gedida (which is the continuation of the Muski), turn to the left yourself up the Sharia El-Menaggidin, which leaves the Sharia El-Akkadin where it joins the Sukkariya. This will take you through a little maze of the oldest and best bazars, the Cotton Bazar, the Scentmakers' Bazar, the Silk Bazar, and the Tunisian and Algerian Bazar, and bring you direct to where your cab is waiting by the mosque of El-Ashraf. You only have to walk straight on past the tiny dens of the silk-weavers and scent merchants, and between the gaudy stalls of the Tunisian Arabs, and follow the windings of the street.

#### XVI. The Greek Cathedral

You will pass quite close to the Greek Cathedral, but it is not interesting; it is merely like a handsome congregationalist church hung with the devotional pictures of the orthodox saints. The chief difference is that the gallery here is reserved for the women and the women are reserved for the



THE ARAB MARKET IN THE VILLAGE NEAR THE MENA HOUSE.

•The trees are date-palms.



### BEDAWIN AT THE GIZEH MARKET

In front is a tall Narghileh or hubble-bubble pipe    Observe the Bedawin head-dresses



A GRAND JEWISH FUNERAL AT CAIRO (II)

The hearse drawn by six horses caparisoned in white. The two Arabs with wands are grooms—the grooms who run before a carriage



A GRAND JEWISH FUNERAL IN CAIRO (1)  
Boys in velvet robes edged with gold braid. In the background is the Opera-house.

gallery. The old Greek Cathedral out at old Cairo, on the other hand, is magnificent, and embodies a stately Roman bastion.

### XVII. The Tombs of the Caliphs

When you get back to your carriage, drive down to the gap in the city walls opposite the mounds called the Windmill Hills. Climb the hills—they are not high, and are full of fragments of old Arab pottery—and from the top of them you get one of the most splendid views in the world—the whole panorama of the Tombs of the Caliphs, with the Citadel towering above them, and the eastern desert rolling away to the horizon behind them. Here are dozens of mosques, some of the most romantic examples of the art of the Saracens.

### XVIII. More Coptic Churches and Mameluke Mansions

Then return to your carriage and drive right up the street till you get to the Sharia Ben-es-Sureni, which runs parallel to the line of the old canal, now filled up and occupied by a tramway. In this street are some of the finest mameluke houses, and in one of the streets at the back of it on the side away from the canal are two extremely ancient and interesting Coptic churches, and a number of Levantine churches, such as the Armenian, the Syrian, and the Maronite.

### XIX. The Antique Mosques and Mansions of the El-Giyûchi District

Drive along the continuation of this street, called the Sharia Esh-Sharawi-el-Barani, to the corner of the Sharia El-Giyûchi, and turn down that street, one of the best old streets in Cairo of the humbler sort, containing old mosques, old Arab houses, one of which, half pulled down, has glorious woodwork; and a splendid antique Arab bath, with many chambers panelled with white marble and adorned with marble fountains. When you get to its end take the first turning to

the right into the Sharia El-Marguchi, and then the first to the right again into the Sharia Birgwan, which winds round until it brings you to one of the most beautiful, most perfect, and least-known mosques of Cairo, the Mosque of Abu-Bekr Mazhar-el-Ansari, built in the best period of the fifteenth century.

## XX. Old Mosques and Mansions of the Sûk-es-Zalat

Then tell the cabman to drive you back to where the Sharia Emir-el-Giyûchi meets the Sûk-es-Zalat, where they are cut by the tramway which runs over the dried-up canal. The Sûk-es-Zalat and its continuation towards the railway station has some splendid old mosques and mameluke houses and interesting shops of the humbler order, in which natives are carpentering or brass-mending. Continue through the typical and picturesque Sharia Bab-el-Bahr to where it runs into the Sharia or Boulevard Clot Bey, close to the railway station.

## XXI. Clot Bey Avenue; the Coptic Cathedral; Little Sicily and the Fishmarket

You will have wandered away from what I may call the Bazar Quarter, but it is easy to get back to it, if you drive down the Boulevard Clot Bey, and you will be able to make some interesting excursions off the direct route. Just off the Avenue, for instance, half way down, is the present Coptic Cathedral (not, of course, to be compared with the old Coptic churches, though it is the chief seat of this ancient religion); and, as you get near the Esbekiya, you can make your cabman drive you through Little Sicily and the Fishmarket, two of the most disreputable, though they are not the least interesting districts of Cairo. Little Sicily is almost like a Sicilian town and full of the lowest-class Italians; the Fishmarket is the quarter of the houses of ill-fame patronised by the Arabs, which at night are a blaze of Oriental vice, and by day have the flamboyant denizens of the quarter, the strange women of



the Bible, lolling about in sufficient numbers to give some idea of the place to those who could not endure its shamelessness at night.

## XXII. The Sitt' Safiya, El-Bordeini and Kesun Mosques

Drive on through the Ataba-el-Khadra and down the Sharia Mohammed Ali as far as the corner of the Sharia Es-Serugiya, after dismounting to walk up to the beautiful little old mosque known as Sitt' Safiya, which has one of the most picturesque situations in Cairo, at the top of a broad and high flight of steps, which make a fine plinth for its cluster of little domes. Be sure to go back and see this mosque afterwards, for it is unlike any other in Cairo. Before you go back to your carriage now walk a few yards farther to see the mosque of El-Bordeini built in the style of Kait Bey's mosque admirably restored, and considered the richest in its decorations, and, by many also the most beautiful, of any mosque in Cairo. It is in an ancient street called the Daudiya, which contains the best Arab restaurant, but few old houses except near the corner of the Sharia El-Magharbilin.

When you are back in your carriage driving down the Sharia Mohammed Ali you will pass the great Kesun Mosque, which one of Khedives cut in half to carry this street straight through from the Ataba-el-Khadra to the Citadel. You need not dismount to look at it, for he not only cut it in half but restored it in what corresponds to our Early Victorian taste.

## XXIII. The Ancient Arab Streets. From the Sharia Serugiya to the Tentmakers' Bazar

When your carriage turns into the Sharia Serugiya and its continuations, the Sharia El-Magharbilin and the Sharia Kasabet-Radowan, tell your cabman to drive slowly, for there is something to see every minute, beginning with the Dervish *tekke* near the corner of the Sharia Mohammed Ali. There are other *tekkes* of Dervishes; there is an ancient fortified gateway; there is an old bath; there is a succession of little

ancient mosques with fascinating mameluke domes, with the beautiful lace-work decoration ; and in between there is much native life to be observed in the marketing done at humble shops. Where the Sharia Kasabet-Radowan draws in to the Sûk of the Tentmakers there is an avenue of stately buildings, native mansions with rich portals and balconies, and mosques with pattern'd stonework and massive bronze grills clustered together. The Sûk of the Tentmakers is a blaze of colour ; it is also a blaze of vulgarity and impudence.

#### XXIV. The Beît-el-Khalîl—an old Arab Mansion

Just at its beginning, notice on the left a huge gateway admitting to the courtyard of what must have been one of the stateliest mansions in Cairo, though what remains of it is given over to tenements and tentmakers. But it still has its *mak'ad* or open hall of the harem, with vast moresco arches soaring almost from the ground to the roof. It is called the Beît-el-Khalîl.

#### XXV. The Bab-es-Zuweyla and the Ancient Buildings round it

Where the Bazar of the Tentmakers debouches opposite the Bab-es-Zuweyla, are two ruined mosques—that on the right very odd, and that on the left exquisite in its decay. It is worth getting out to examine the former and to have another look at the Bab-es-Zuweyla, with its towering minarets and its weapons of the Afrit giant high on its mighty sides, its rags shredded to its door-nails by those who have sick children, its humble water-sellers, its *fikees* reciting the Koran, and its crowds of people, who look as if they had stepped out of the Bible. If you go just through the gate and take the first turn to the right, you will find yourself in an alley which I could not define, indescribably picturesque, edged with stalls of bread in uncouth shapes—an alley wedged between superb and soaring mosques and fountains, the very breath of the East.

**XXVI. From the Bab-es-Zuweyla to the Citadel; the Kismas-el-Ishaky Mosque and the Fountain of Mohammed Katkhoda**

But go back to your carriage and drive down another of Cairo's most inimitable streets called here the Sharia Darb-el-Ahmar, and later on the Sharia El-Tabbana, the Sharia Bab-el-Wazir, and the Sharia El-Magar. I hardly ever saw such a street, though it begins plainly enough with the Bazar of the Donkey-harness Sellers, men who deal in brocaded saddles, and necklaces of silver and turquoise blue glass, and gaudy reins and head-stalls; for they show but little on their shop fronts. You pass nothing of note but one of Cairo's most ancient shops till you come to a place where the whole street seems to be stopped by a mosque standing across it, the Kismas-el-Ishaky Mosque, one of Kait Bey's best, restored to its pristine splendour with too lavish a hand, though no lack of taste. Its severity is softened by the exquisite wooden gallery which connects it, I suppose, with some educational building—here in Cairo a mosque had its school as regularly as a church had its convent in Rome. A little below on the right, at the beginning of the Sharia El-Tabbana, is one of the most exquisite fountains and schools in the city. In Cairo a fountain always has its Koran school for the little ones above. This Sebil of Mohammed Katkhoda is almost as exquisite in its colouring as the interior of St. Mark's, and, inside, its fountain chamber is lined with old blue Oriental tiles like the great and little Blue Mosques.

**XXVII. The Magnificent old Mosque of El-Merdani**

Not very much lower down, of notable grandeur, elegance, and charm, is the great fourteenth-century Mosque of El-Merdani, which outside has lofty walls, pierced with gracious moresco windows and topped with battlements, retreating in echelon. They have long since mellowed from

the perpendicular; their stone has gone golden; there is a certain castle look about them. The two great doors of the mosque, north and south, are invitingly open. Alone of all Cairo's mosques El-Merdani shows you its whole heart, a gleaming white court surrounded by a noble arcade and graced with an ancient fountain; an old *luwân* with mighty columns: *mimbar* and *mihrab* and marble-panelled walls, all rich and old and beautiful, and a roof painted with the gay hues in which the Saracen delighted, sobered by five hundred years. El-Merdani is one of the most lovable as well as one of the most magnificent of mosques.

## XXVIII. The Palace of the Haret-el-Merdani—the finest Courtyard in Cairo

Here, on this first drive of Orientation, you must leave that inimitable street which sweeps up to the Citadel from El-Merdani to see the finest mansions of the Arab city. There is one right behind the never-opened west door of the mosque, but it is maimed of its splendour. But in the Haret-el-Merdani, a few yards off, is another, beloved of postcard-makers, which must in its day have been a rival of the Palace of Sultan Beybars. No mansion in Cairo has such a beautiful *mak'ad*, for the stairway which admits to it leads up to a portal almost as high as the three great arches which soar to the roof, and the gallery from which they spring has two exquisite little pavilions of *meshrebiya* work for the ladies of the harem to use when they wished to look on the courtyard unveiled. Other portions of the court's façade are richly ornamented; vast antique stables and outhouses lead out of it; and below the noble *meshrebiya'd* windows and sunken panels is painted a most absurd wall-painting of the experiences of a Hadji who seems to have met a fat-winged Cupid on his way to Mecca. The street door of this house with the Khedivial badge in a lozenge is a typical specimen. Close by is another fine old mansion not quite so good.

**XXIX. Old Arab-Mansions on the Way to the Armourers' Sûk; and an old Arab Bath**

From here drive to the Sûk of the Armourers which contains a number of typical old Arab mansions belonging to very conservative people, who still keep their front doors shut, a very rare thing in Cairo—I have no doubt that some of them have splendid courtyards. One day I found one of these doors, which was nearly always shut, open, and went in. It opened on to a garden with a superb teak-wood trellis pergola and a luxuriant garden. Lower down there were at least two houses like the famous palace in the Haret-el-Merdani, but not so good. Near them were the famous baths of the Emir Beshtak, the handsomest in Cairo, very old, with their pavements, and the panelling of their walls and their octagonal fountains all in antique white marble.

**XXX. The Armourers' Sûk; Sultan Hassan's and the El-Rifai'ya Mosque; First View of the Citadel**

Just beyond this you will find the Armourers' Sûk commencing in earnest. There is no armour to be found in it nowadays, and very few weapons of romantic Arab patterns, though there are a few of the long-barrelled Bedawin guns, which have their stocks ornamented with almonds of bone or mother-of-pearl. The Armourers' Sûk lives by the sale of what are described as Sheffield knives, but come from some German Sheffield. The Armourers' Sûk runs into the Sharia Mehemet Ali at its finest point, where the great mosques of Sultan Hassan and El-Rifai'ya tower up right and left, and Saladin's Citadel, crowned by Mehemet Ali's Mosque, faces them.

I have written of these two great mosques in my chapter on mosques; both are like mighty castles.

**XXXI. The Drive from Sultan Hassan's Mosque to the Citadel and back to El-Merdani's Mosque**

Time yourself to arrive in the Place Rumeleh, in which the Sharia Mohammed Ali terminates, at sunset, when the

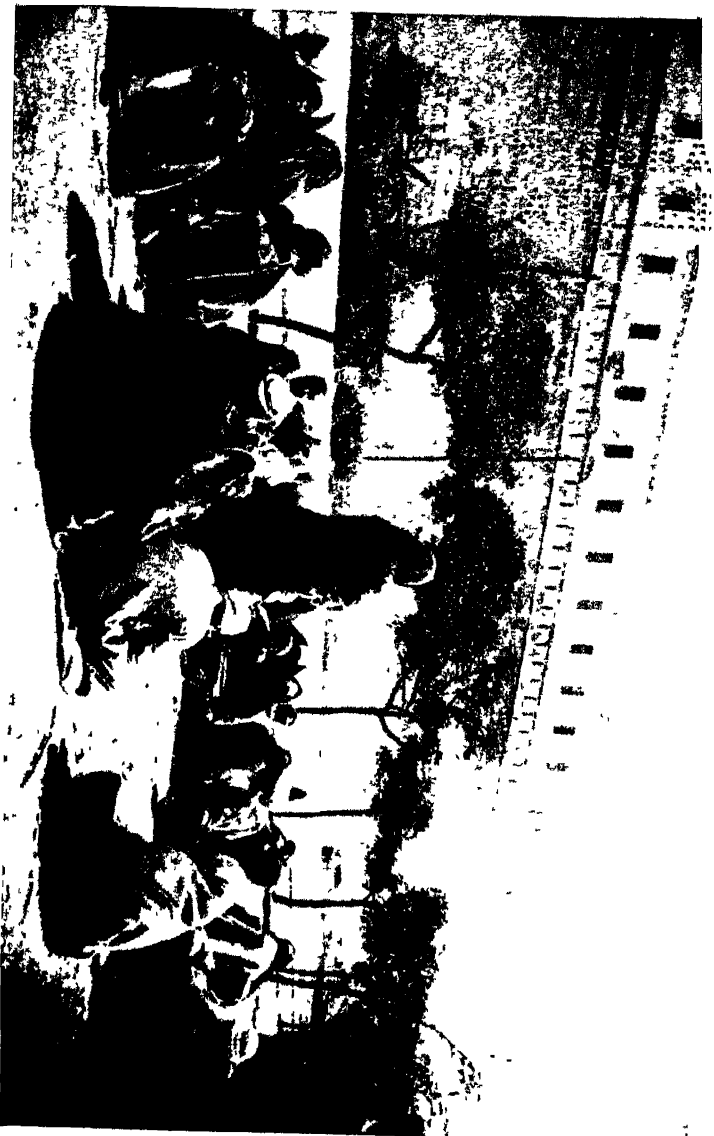
glare of an indescribable colour between purple and orange makes the rock of the Citadel and Mehemet Ali's Mosque, with its soaring domes and minarets, shine with an unearthly radiance. Look at them long and well, and then drive up the hill past the romantic-looking Mahmudiya and Emir Akhor mosques, gay little things with arabesqued mameluke domes, to the principal gate of the Citadel, the Bab-el-Gedid, and walk round the great mosque to stand on the terrace beside it and see the Pyramids standing out purple against the afterglow. Leave the Citadel, before the darkness falls, to drive down the steep, winding street called in its different parts the Sharia El-Magar, the Sharia Bab-el-Wazir, and the Sharia El-Tabbana, till you get to the Merdani Mosque again. You will then have completed the round of the most notable streets and buildings of the quarter between the Muski and the Sharia Mohammed Ali, north and south, and the Citadel and the line of the filled-up canal east and west.

**XXXII. The Mosques of the Sharia Bab-el-Wazir; the Kheirbek Mosque, the Blue Mosque, and Sultan Sha'ban's Mosque**

But before I dismiss this part of Cairo I must recapitulate the glories of that hill-street from the Citadel to El-Merdani. Nearly the whole of the Bab-el-Wazir portion of it is full of ancient mosques and Arab mansions, and there is a curious cemetery just outside the Bab-el-Wazir. Three of the mosques in this street are large and magnificent, the Kheirbek Mosque, which, when restored, would be worthy of a place beside mosques like El-Bordeini; the mosque of Ibrahim Agha, famous as the Blue Mosque, which has its *liwān* lined with magnificent old blue tiles, and one of the largest court-yards in Cairo; and the fourteenth-century mosque of Sultan Sha'ban, which is now in the restorer's hands.

**XXXIII. An Example of the Windows called Kamariya**

Almost next to it, divided from it by a beautiful old wooden arcaded gallery, is an old Arab mansion, which has



A STORY-TELLER RECITING FROM THE " ARABIAN NIGHTS "

In the background are the ramparts of the Citadel



A SNAKE CHARMER.

The snake is coiled in the sand just below his tambourine—doing nothing, as usual. The audience is a little *distrail*. In the background are the ramparts of the Citadel.



in its harem, often shown to strangers by the courtesy of its proprietor, a large hall with a tessellated marble pavement and walls, splendid *meshrebiya'd* windows, and about the best examples to be found in any domestic building of the fretted plaster-work windows set with little gems of coloured glass which are called *kamariya*.

#### XXXIV. The Sights of the Citadel

There are, of course, many things to see in the Citadel besides Mehemet Ali's Mosque and the view. There is, for example, the winding rock-girt lane between the Bab-el-Wastani and the Bab-el-Azab, which was the scene of the Massacre of the Mamelukes; there is Joseph's Well, three hundred feet deep, which one set of archæologists attribute to Saladin, whose name was Joseph, and who built the Citadel, and another set attribute to the Pharaohs; there is the huge shell, noble in its decay, with its splendid colonnade, of the En-Nasir Mosque, which was the royal mosque of the Caliphs when they lived in the Citadel; and there is the beautiful little mosque of Suleiman Pasha, the best sixteenth-century mosque in Cairo.

There are also the Palace of the Khedives, a very shabby affair, and the massive ruins of the Palace of the great Saladin, destroyed to make way for the Palace and Mosque of the Khedives. And there is that inimitable view of the El-Giyuchi Mosque on the Mokattams above. Look long at that, because, as it rises far away and high, connected by ruinous stairways and causeways, it is a gaunt skeleton of the Middle Ages outlined against the desert and the sky, and it has twice sealed the fate of Cairo. Napoleon first, and Mohammed Ali afterwards, silenced the guns of the Citadel from its dominating height.

#### XXXV. The El-Hilmiya and Ibn-Tulun Districts

There is another very ancient quarter of Cairo, lying between the Sharia Mohammed Ali on the north and the Bab Ibn-Tulun on the south, the Citadel and the Place Moham-

med Ali on the east, and the Sharia Seyyida-Zeynab and the Derb-el-Gamamise on the west. It divides itself naturally into two parts, the El-Hilmiya district and the district round the mosque of Ibn-Tulun, which at the time that this great Sultan established his palace there was called El-Katai. This is very high ground ; it was the Citadel of Cairo as well as Royal Palace, until Gohar founded El-Kahira on the site of the present Beit-el-Kadi. Gohar was the General who conquered Egypt for the Fatimite Caliphs of Tunis.

### XXXVI. The Derb-el-Gamamise and its Sights

It is convenient to take the Hilmiya district first Drive down the Sharia Mohammed Ali till you come to the site of the old canal, which divides Cairo into two portions. The next street beyond it and parallel to it is the old Derb-el-Gamamise, which is called the Sharia Habbaniya as it approaches the Sharia Mohammed Ali. It contains some fine old mameluke houses and a Dervish *tekkiya* before you come to the palace of the Derb-el-Gamamise, which is now occupied by the Ministry of Instruction, and one of the three great Royal Colleges which have staffs of English University men.

### XXXVII. The Antique Arab Palace of the Sheikh Sadat

A little beyond this a small street called the Haret-el-Sadat leads to the palace of the late Sheikh Sadat, who was a lineal descendant of the Prophet, and the most holy personage in Africa. His palace is in some ways the most notable in Cairo ; it has a large and splendid courtyard, immense old stables, a wonderfully picturesque harem, and is noted for the hall of its Selamlik. This is lined with blue porcelain tiles, and in it the late Sheikh bestowed titles of honour like " Well of Truth " on Mohammedan notables. It is the largest and most unique hall in Cairo, if it is not comparable in beauty, architecture, and decoration with those of Sultan Beybars and the Gamal-ed-Din.

## XXXVIII. The Sharia El-Hilmiya and its Mosques

From here tell your cabman to drive back to the Sharia Mohammed Ali and proceed down it till you get to the street called the Sharia El-Hilmiya, another of the best streets in Cairo, for this contains two beautiful old *tekkes* or mosques of dervishes; the El-Mase Mosque, one of the most beautiful, most perfect, and most reverend of the fourteenth century mosques; a school which has two very handsome loggias; and the magnificent fountain erected by the present Khedivial family, before you reach the Sharia Chikhun, with its continuations, the Sharia Es-Saliba, the Sharia El-Khederi, and the Sharia El-Karasin, which divides it from the Ibn-Tulun quarter.

## XXXIX. The Sharia Es-Chikhun and its Mosques

On the other side of the Sharia Es-Chikhun are the north and south Chikhun mosques, the latter being the best of all the dervish *tekkes* in Cairo, and possessing a charming little triangular leafy courtyard, and an exquisite and unrestored old roof to its very fine *liwān*. Farther on there are two other very picturesque mosques of no great size, and at the end is the mosque of Seyyida Zeynab itself. This is large and modern, with no pretensions whatever from the point of view of art, and very difficult for a Christian to enter on account of the fanaticism which it inspires. Nor is it worth taking any trouble to try to enter it.

The southern half of this district contains a number of old Arab mansions of a humbler class, besides the street of splendid mameluke palaces which overlook the Tulun Mosque, and some very beautiful old fountains and schools.

## XL. The Mosque of Ibn-Tulun

Drive from the Chikhun Mosque down the Sharia Er-Rukbiya, which contains some old buildings, to the Sharia Ibn-Tulun, from which you gain admission to the great mosque of the same name. The mosque of Ibn-Tulun in

several ways is the most notable in Cairo. It is one of the very largest, it is the oldest but one in foundation, and is the only mosque in Cairo which remains at all in its original condition. Instead of preserving an original feature here and there, it nearly all of it remains as Ibn-Tulun built it, except for the ravages of time and weather. Here you have an immense area of the durable Arab plaster-work. Here you see the first use of plastered piers instead of marble columns taken from temples and churches. Here you have magnificent examples of the fretted plaster, window tracery, and wall ornament, for which the Arabs are so justly famous, a thousand years old. And historically it is equally interesting.

#### **XLI. Old Mameluke Houses near Ibn-Tulun's Mosque**

Round the mosque there are some remains of the fortifications of Ibn-Tulun's citadel, and in the long street down which you have to drive, skirting the walls of the Ibn-Tulun Mosque, on your way to the mosque of Kait Bey, there are some grand old mameluke houses, with the harem windows of the upper stories hanging far over the street, and latticed with splendid *meshrebiya* work.

#### **XLII. The Mosque of Kait Bey**

The mosque of Kait Bey, which lies behind the Ibn-Tulun Mosque on the edge of the city, is considered the gem of the many mosques and palaces which we have remaining of that famous building Caliph. It was built about the end of the fifteenth century, and has been admirably restored, and its old mellow colouring and the soft lines of its architecture are unimpaired. Its painted roof is especially beautiful, and presents some of the most elegant and characteristic effects of Saracenic decoration.

#### **XLIII. The Ancient Houses of El-Katai and the Tombs of the Mamelukes**

There are several other little mosques with picturesque exteriors and many ancient houses in this quarter of Cairo

But when you have seen the Kait Bey Mosque, instead of driving back through it, drive round it, and skirt the Mohammedan cemetery till you reach the famous Tombs of Mamelukes. The best of these mameluke tombs, which are practically mosques, are not to be compared with the best of the Tombs of the Caliphs on the other side of the Citadel. But they are mightily picturesque many of them, and noble little pieces of architecture. And this cemetery is particularly rich in picturesque minor tombs, built in the style of our altar tombs or classical stelæ, and enriched with Arabic inscriptions in the gayest colours.

#### XLIV. The Mosque of Imam Shaf'yi

The ancient and famous mosque of Imam Shaf'yi to which Saladin attached the first *medressa*, or collegiate mosque-school, lies on the edge of the Tombs of the Mamelukes. I have seen pictures in the office of the Wakfs of very ancient and beautiful decorations in this mosque, but I have never been able to gain admission to it. It is one of the three mosques from which Christians are supposed to be excluded.

#### XLV. The Mounds of Fustat—the First Arab City on the Site of Cairo

From here you can skirt the range of hills, for the mounds virtually amount to hills, which cover the ruins of the first Mohammedan city on the site of modern Cairo, generally called Fustat. This was built by El-Amr, the general who conquered Egypt for the Arabs soon after the establishment of the Mohammedan religion, and was burnt in the middle of the twelfth century to prevent its falling into the hands of the Crusaders. Any one is allowed to excavate in these mounds, and beautiful pieces of Arab pottery anterior to the fire are discovered there. Many of them may be seen in the Museum at South Kensington, and I have a collection of pieces which I dug out myself, in company with Dr. Llewellyn Phillips, the brilliant Cairo doctor. You can

drive round this way to old Cairo, which practically consists of three parts, all of them embraced in the noble sweep of the aqueduct of Saladin, which looks like an Imperial Roman aqueduct carried on Gothic arches.

#### XLVI. The Mosque of Amr

First visit the portion of old Cairo which consists of the great mosque of Amr and various old Coptic churches embedded in tiny citadels at the edge of the mounds of Fustat. In its present condition the best parts of the mosque of Amr date from the fifteenth century ; the *liwān* is of great size, with noble colonnades, whose hundred and twenty columns come from ancient temples. But the old mosque is very ruinous in spite of the prophecy that whenever it is destroyed the Mohammedans shall cease to be the rulers of Egypt.

#### XLVII. The Coptic Churches of Der Abu Sefen

Three of the best Coptic churches in this part, including Abu Sefen, the Church of the Virgin (Sitt' Mariam), and Anba Shenuda, and a convent, are all of them contained in the little brick citadel with the fortress gateway called Der Abu Sefen. Abu Sefen itself, which is being restored, is the best example of a Coptic basilica, and contains many beautiful decorations. Anba Shenuda is almost equally interesting, and also contains magnificent antique decorations. Sitt' Mariam, the remaining church in this *der*, is very old and curious. There is another *der* quite close to it called the Der-el-Berat, but it only contains a convent.

#### XLVIII. Old Cairo

Next visit the long low street which runs from here to the old Roman Citadel of Cairo called Babylon. There are two or three rather picturesque little mosques in it, and for the rest it consists of small characteristic native shops. It is a good place for observing native life, and an excellent place for photographing, because the houses are so low that they do not get into the way of the sun.

### XLIX. The Gizeh Ferry; The Nilometer; Moses on Roda Island; The Origin of the Egyptian Babylon

At the end of this street the Nile suddenly becomes interesting. All sorts of odd native craft, laden with poor Egyptians with the most kodakable attitudes and occupations, come across from Gizeh to the Old Cairo landing. And from it you are ferried across to the Island of Roda to see the famous and beautiful mediæval Nilometer, some charming old Pashas' gardens, a fifteenth-century mosque of Kait Bey, and the alleged site of the landing of Moses in his ark of bulrushes. Such a popular Arab saint as Moses had of course to have the scene of his adventure somewhere in Cairo, and this site had the advantage of including the claims of Heliopolis, if we are to believe that the Roman Citadel of Cairo kept on the name of Babylon because it occupied the site of Bab-el-On—i.e. the Gate of On—the ancient Egyptian name for Heliopolis, the City of the Sun.

### L. The Coptic Houses and the Famous Coptic Churches of Babylon

Babylon itself is not an easy place to drive about, but it contains several buildings of the highest interest; it has for example the most ancient Coptic settlement in Cairo, consisting of a solid block of houses with streets diving underneath them, lighted here and there by spaces like the interior of a courtyard, and containing hidden away in its most secret part, without any proper entrances, magnificent old Coptic churches like Abu Sarga and Sitt' Barbara—that is, St. Sergius and Santa Barbara, both of which are of very high antiquity and hardly altered in their interior.

### LI. The Residence of the Holy Family in Egypt

Abu Sarga goes so far as to have a crypt in which they show the niches occupied by Our Lord and His Mother and Joseph when they were sojourning in Egypt.

### LII. The Mo'allaka—the Hanging Church of Babylon

The best of all the Coptic churches is outside of the honeycomb which contains these two. It is called the Mo'allaka, the Hanging Church of Babylon, because it is built high up in a Roman bastion. It had the same sort of entrance as Abu Sarga once, but it has had a new and very beautiful entrance built for it, with a charming garden and a ceremonial staircase, and a courtyard like a Tunisian palace. It is one of the most beautiful churches in Christendom, not unworthy of mention in the same breath with the Royal Chapel of Palermo, or portions of St. Mark's. All these Coptic churches have the most exquisite panelling of old dark wood, inlaid with disks of mother-of-pearl and ivory, the latter exquisitely carved in some of them, and El-Mo'allaka has, besides, a glorious Byzantine marble pulpit, and perhaps the richest of the ancient paintings of saints, with which these old Coptic churches abound. Their services are highly picturesque, but they and their worshippers swarm with fleas. The Copt is a proverb for vermin.

### LIII. The Church of the Virgin; Der Todros and Der Bablun.

Adjoining the Mo'allaka in a bastion of the magnificent Roman gate unearthed a few years ago, is another ancient Coptic chapel dedicated to the Virgin.

Those who wish to make an exhaustive study of the Coptic churches of Babylon will find two other *ders* containing their ancient churches a little farther on—the Der Bablun i.e. of Babylon, which encloses "the Church of the Virgin by Bablun of the Steps," called for short Sitt' Mariam, which has ancient features, and the Der Todros, which contains the Church of St. Theodore, Abu Todros, and the Church of St. Sirius and St. John, Abu Kir-wa-Hanna. The churches are not very ancient in their present form, but there are some fine ancient things preserved in them in the way of vestments and plate.



## LIV. The Old Greek Cathedral of Babylon

Besides the Coptic churches, Babylon contains the splendid Greek Church of St George, formerly the Cathedral, built in and around another Roman bastion, and recently admirably restored, both inside and out ; it is now very fine, and from its roof you get perhaps the best view of Cairo, the Nile, and the Pyramids.

## LV. Bulak, Shubra, Rod-el-Farag, and Abbassiya

There are three other districts of Cairo to which I have not yet alluded, Bulak, the ancient port of Cairo, to which you drive down by the Sharia Bulak, which commences close to the Continental Hotel ; Shubra, and Rod-el-Farag, to which you drive past the railway station ; and Abbassiya, to which you drive from the other side of the railway station. Helio-polis, in which an attempt is being made to provide Cairo with a new suburb, can hardly be considered part of the city ; it is more to be classed with the country suburbs like Matariya, which it adjoins. It is also quite new.

Bulak is an unsavoury part of Cairo, but contains some old mosques, and some interesting native life and streets. But, except where they concern water life, these can better be studied in the Arab city under the Citadel.

Shubra formerly contained the most charming Pashas' villas and gardens of all Cairo ; the drive along the Shubra road was famous, but they have most of them been sacrificed to the jerry-builder, and present a hideous spectacle of grubbed-up trees and foundations. Rod-el-Farag, adjoining Shubra, is the corn port of Cairo, and, as that, has some picturesque features, such as the forest of tall masts of the *gyassas* or Nile boats, which bring the grain. Some people might consider the low dancing-booths, where fat Levantine women posture before Arabs, picturesque ; to me they were only disgusting.

Abbassiya is chiefly important for the British military cantonments, where they have Cavalry, and Infantry, and Horse-Artillery, and a few minor units. Here on the edge of

the desert is the parade ground on which the great reviews are held, and beyond it are the observatory, a couple of palaces of the Khedive, Matariya, and Heliopolis. Driving out to Abbassiya you pass the vast and beautiful shell of the Es-Zahir Mosque, one of the most ancient in Cairo, though nothing remains of it except its splendid exterior.

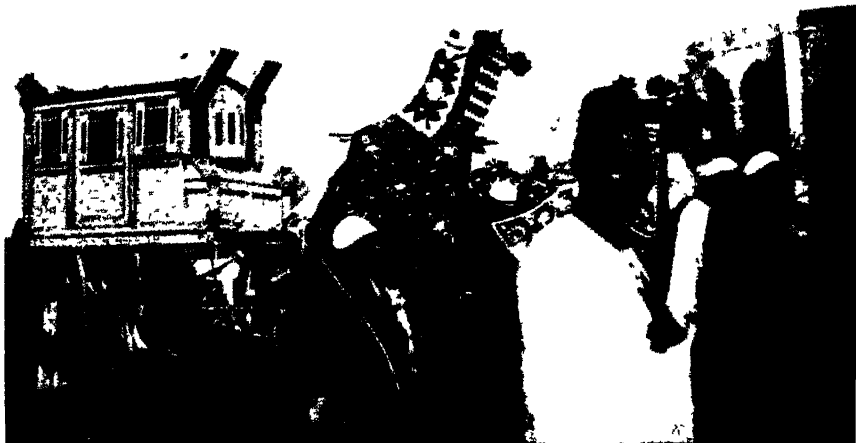
### LVI. The Drive across the Nile Bridge

The principal drive of Cairo I have left to the last. When any resident in Cairo says she is going for a drive she means that she is going to drive across the Nile Bridge, beside which stands another of the chief British military stations, the Kasr-el-Nil barracks. Whenever you are over the bridge, which at certain hours of the day cannot be crossed owing to the turn-bridge being opened for shipping to pass through, you find yourself in a sort of square, with two main roads running out of it, one of which leads down to the Khedivial Sporting Club, the chief pleasure resort of Cairo, and the Ghezira Palace Hotel, while the other leads to Gizeh, the Zoological Gardens, the Sphinx, the Pyramids, and the Mena House. As drives these are the pleasantest in Cairo. For nowhere else can you drive more than a few yards away from bricks and mortar. Some day, doubtless, there will be a proper motor road out to the baths of Helwân and the ruins of Memphis, which are a better distance, for the Pyramids of Gizeh are only eight miles from the heart of Cairo.



A CAMEL BAND IN A PROCESSION WHICH HAS GONE TO MEET A PILGRIM RETURNED FROM  
MECCA, OUTSIDE THE RAILWAY STATION

The accoutrements of the camel are of scarlet cloth decorated with pieces of mirror and small cowrie shells



A SILVER-AND-IVORY PALANQUIN SUSPENDED BETWEEN CAMELS IN THE PROCESSION  
OF A PILGRIM RETURNED FROM MECCA

Notice the wonderful head-dresses of the camels made of scarlet cloth encrusted with cowrie shells  
and pieces of mirror

# PART I

## THE CITY OF "THE ARABIAN NIGHTS"

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### CHAPTER I

#### The Old-World Oriental Life of Cairo

ALL Egyptians are born with a natural desire to please. The rich Egyptian in the intervals of putting on a swagger which he imagines to be English, and the frothing Nationalist, when he is not Benjamin-Franklin-ing to audiences of students, are as anxious to please as a spaniel, while the poor, whether in the villages of Upper Egypt or in the Arab city at Cairo, show the smiling good-nature of the Orient. I thought the unspoiled Egyptian poor delightful people; they are Nature's gentlemen, kind, adorably simple, with natural good manners. Even the Egyptian is not specially untruthful when it involves an automatic loss of *bakshish*. The life of the poor in the Arab city still preserves the grace of the Middle Ages. The men wear turbans and the long blue gowns called *galabeahs*; the women, whose faces are shrouded by the *burka*, wear a sort of black bridal veil, which makes them look as if they walked about with a bag over them, coming nearly down to their feet, bare, except for the heavy anklets, which give them a biblical finish. The black muffled women of the city look like walking mysteries as they shuffle along the street. You lose nothing by their being veiled; when you see them unveil, which is a matter of no consequence and frequent occurrence, you see a fat round face, pointed at chin and forehead, with the

features and expression of the sun on Old Moore's almanack—that is to say, with hardly any expression, or the expression of an unconsidered female drudge. The country women, on the other hand, especially where they have a strong admixture of *bedarwin* blood, are often charmingly pretty, and seldom wear the face-veil, though they sometimes draw their head-veil closer if you want to photograph them, till they understand that they will get a penny for being immortalised by the camera. The children of the city are made hideous by their parents' pride in adorning them with European slops. I daresay they would be quite pretty if they walked about in blue cotton nightgowns like their fathers.

At Cairo one often sighs for the mediæval grace and colour imparted to Tunis by her rich Arabs wearing their native dress, made with the costliest materials, the most delicate colours, and the most elegant draperies. The rich Tunisian, when it is warm enough, dresses like a courtier of the Alhambra. The Cairo effendi wears English clothes made by Greeks, kept in countenance by a *tarbûsh* if he is particular about showing that he is not an infidel.

But to return to the mediæval poor of Cairo. The water-seller stands in the van. Sometimes he is resplendent in the old national dress and carrying brass cups, that shine like beaten gold, made in the shape of sacramental chalices, into which he drops aniseed from the curled and tapering spout of a shining brazen urn. But usually, in the fine old crusted parts of the city, he looks like a dirty beggar. His body is in rags, his legs are nearly black and nearly bare (which last is not surprising, as he walks right into the Nile to get his water), and he carries his water in a black skin slung round his body or a huge earthenware pitcher in a net upon his back. He sells his water in a cheap black earthenware saucer. He is the type of charity, for, though he is desperately poor, he often gives his water away to those who cannot afford to pay. He is wonderfully adroit at pouring his water out with a bend of his back: the clear, cool spurt leaps over his shoulder into the saucer without

spilling a drop. He is quite a picturesque object when he is walking about with his water-skin, a swollen amorphous mass with its legs tied, hanging round him like a hurdy-gurdy ; but he is at his best when standing waist-deep in the river letting his skins expand and sink in the shallow water. The sign of his presence is the clinking together of brazen saucers ; they give a note as clear as a bell, especially when they are made of fine thick brass. There are always one or two of the sort that look like beggars hanging about the Bab-es-Zuweyla ; their richer brothers haunt the Ataba-el-Khadra in company with the lemonade-sellers.

It is the lemonade-seller who is most reminiscent of the days of the good Harun-ar-Raschid. He is inconceivably resplendent. His lemonade urn is sometimes six feet high, with its huge glass globes surmounted by domes of beaten brass, which make it look like a doll's mosque. His brass cups look like the golden goblets of a king, though his European customers generally prefer tumblers. He has slung round his waist a wonderful brass tray about six inches deep, with a frame like the fiddles of a ship for its top, to hold bottles and glasses. And he dresses like the *sais* of a Khedivial princess, with a blue silk tassel like the tail of a horse trailing from the jaunty little fez stuck on the side of his head, a gold embroidered waistcoat, open, to show his fine linen, wide breeches stiff with braiding, and stockings as well as shoes. He is the pride of the street, or at all events looks proud enough to be—to his other finery he sometimes adds a scarlet apron.

The sherbet sellers are much humbler people ; they have rather peculiar pitchers and goblets. Most sherbets look like muddy water ; their essential feature is sugar, and they contain some fruit juice. The sherbet shops always look as if they were being got ready for an illumination, for their fronts are hung all round with little brass buckets shaped like the pitchers of the Pignatelli Pope. Their rivals are the cheap restaurants, which have two enormous brass jugs of the shape of Arab coffee-pots sitting up like a pair of

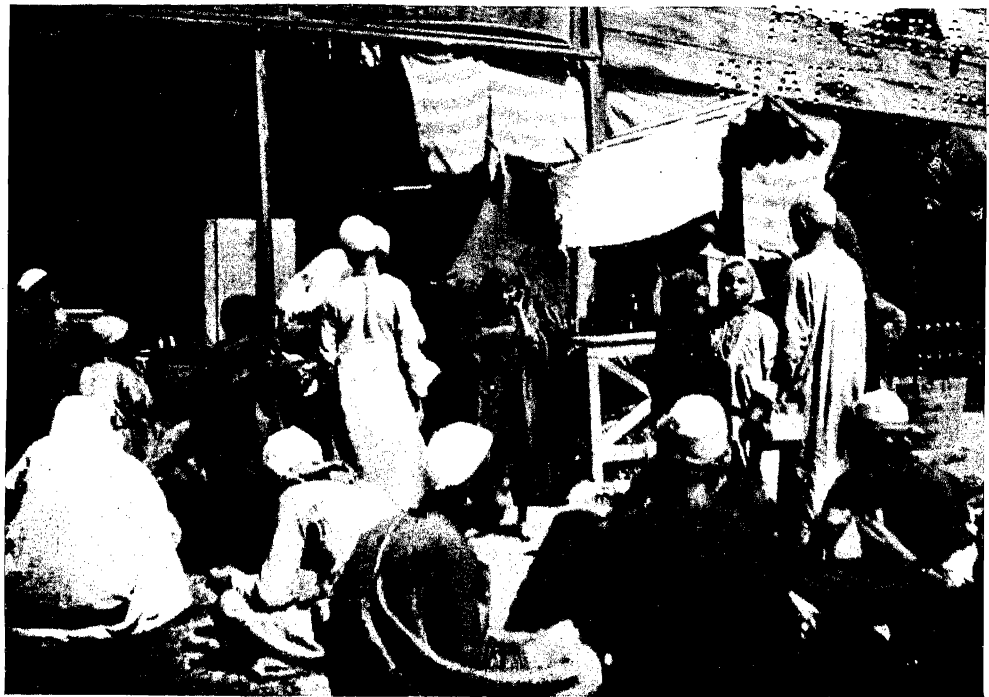
Phoenixes in the ashes of the humble fire. They have quite gigantic beaks. They are used, I believe, for hot water, but I never saw any human being using them. They are the most imposing pieces of brass you see in Egypt, the land of brass in more senses than one.

Two very mediæval people are the cotton carder and the man who turns the little pegs used in making *meshrebiya* screens. The turner does his turning with a bow like the pigmies use for shooting poisoned arrows, and when you see the carders sitting on the *mastabas* outside the mattress-maker's shop, you imagine that you have a row of lovers who cannot get any sound out of their lutes. The instruments they use for flicking out the cotton look much more capable of evolving a sane melody than most musical instruments of the twanging Orient.

I often went into the Armourers' Sûk, in the hopes of seeing its apprentices doing up a Crusader's suit for a stray survivor of the Mamelukes, but I generally found them sharpening carving-knives; their principal business nowadays is in table-knives labelled Sheffield. One or two of them have pieces of armour in glass cases, and if the *bedarwin* wants his own preposterous guns, with barrels like fishing-rods and stocks inlaid with bone almonds, he must come here for them.

The weaver, on the whole, is most faithful to the Middle Ages, as he sits, with his legs through the floor, in front of a loom which looks like the inside of a superannuated piano, throwing his shuttle across the warp threads and pressing each line of weaving down with a comb. The workers in precious metals are mediæval everywhere, till they condescend to the mechanical multiplication of watches and silver-backed hair-brushes for shop-girls. In Egypt they crouch on the floor over a dish of grey ash, with a lump of live charcoal smouldering in its midst, till it is fanned into white fury by a blow-pipe. In this the gold or silver is heated till it looks almost transparent, while it is decorated with delicate filigrees and rosettes; or you see a tiny hammer doing its work on a toy anvil.





A DONKEY-BOYS' RESTAURANT.

The customers are sitting about the pavement eating their lunch.



#### FORAGE CAMEL

Near the picturesque fountain given by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in the square in front of the Governorat at Cairo.

The coppersmith, the brass-worker, and the weavers of matting and baskets have time-honoured ways; the basket-maker and the basin-maker alike hold what they are making with their toes, so as to have both hands free. With baskets this does not seem so unnatural - a monkey might be taught to make a basket; but to hold a brass vessel with your toes, while you hammer it into curves like a mosque's dome, and chisel it into arabesques, is a work of art in itself.

It is barbaric rather than mediæval, I suppose, to iron the washing with your feet, using such a very large iron and to stand under the thing you are sawing, drawing the saw towards you.

The primitive crafts, which make photography so extravagant at the Market of the Afternoon and the two country markets near the Pyramids, must be described in their own setting. So much for trades.

There is nothing in which mediævalism dies so hard as in religion, and the law is mixed up with the prophets among Arab populations . . . It adds greatly to the picturesqueness of the streets when an earnest Mohammedan says his prayers in them. But Mohammedans who are strict in this matter are becoming rare in Cairo.

The whole life in the mosques is romantically mediæval. The people you see there praying or reading the Scriptures, with their shoes and their water-bottle beside them, look as if they might have been there for a thousand years. When you have looked at them you feel that this is none other than the House of God.

In the chief mosque of El-Azhar, which is the central University of all Islam, the teaching has changed little in its thousand years of existence; it is still the Koran and what is necessary for the teaching and understanding of the Koran. No attempt has been made to bring it into line with modern institutions. And I understand that the administration of the law<sup>1</sup> in the Kadi's courts and the

<sup>1</sup> In this very year of grace one of the Grand Mufti's excuses for refusing to sanction the execution of the murderer of Boutros Pasha was that the revolver (with which the murder was committed) was not mentioned in the Koran.

administration of the profits of ecclesiastical property in Cairo interfere with our notions of civilisation. But these, I suppose, are the most important elements in preserving a perfect mediæval city for us in Cairo.

I was never tired of watching the life of the really poor, whether I was rambling in the Arab city at Cairo or in the villages of Upper Egypt. In Asia and Africa the poor are as natural as animals

I have heard many tourists complain of Cairo being too European, as I have heard them making the same complaint against Yokohama. Round the chief hotels the charge of course is true; but you need not go more than a mile in either city to find yourself in the undiluted Orient, where clothing is one thickness of cotton, and shopping is done with sub-divisions of pence.

In Cairo there are several Arab quarters: Old Cairo is one of the best for seeing the humours of poverty, but not so good as the bazars for seeing the colour of Cairo.

## CHAPTER II

### Street Life in Cairo as seen from the Continental Hotel

CAIRO is a kodaker's paradise not quite so elastic as Omdurman. For in hot countries people are apt to carry on their occupations in the shade, and in Omdurman there is no shade, as the Khalifa would not allow any one to have a two-story house but himself.

Fortunately, Cairo is full of wide sunny spaces, and the Arab always makes a shop of the street, so there is an immense amount of street life in full sunshine.

There is one great advantage in staying at the Continental Hotel for the two or three months of the Cairo season: you can see, without dressing to go out, the most roaring farce ever presented off the stage. The great hotel has a nice sunny terrace with a balustrade which looks out on the Street of the Camel—the Regent Street of Cairo—and the Eskebiya Gardens and a regular museum of touts.

It is doubtful which could be satirised more successfully as a human Zoological Gardens, the people who sit on the terrace behind the railings, Americans chiefly, with a strong dash of Jews, Turks, and Infidels, which last name the Mohammedan applies to the Levantine with singular felicity—or the extraordinary collection of parasites in the street below.

Those of the parasites, who are not dragomans have something to sell, generally something that no sane person would want to buy.

The street Arab who walks about with a stuffed croco-

dile on his head must by this time be convinced of its unsaleability. He exhorts you to buy it, but so soon afterwards, without a real bargainer's delay—invites you to take his photograph with it for a shilling. His price for being photographed comes down to a small piastre if you are obdurate.

I have seen stuffed crocodiles offered often, and once at least a live boa-constrictor put up in a glass-fronted box like honeycomb, and a live leopard—not a very old one—in a cage. Pigs in cages are comparatively common, and, as weight presents no difficulty to the Egyptian educated as a porter, men carry round all sorts of furniture for sale. I have seen men with quite large tables and cabinets on their backs patiently waiting for purchasers. I once saw a man with a palm-tree fourteen feet high on his head. I photographed him; less adult trees and shrubs are common.

Strawberry sellers are insistent in February, in spite of the fact that every foreigner knows or believes that their Egyptian vendors moisten the strawberries in their mouths whenever they look dusty. There are many sellers of dates and figs, though dates are things which I should not like to buy from an Egyptian in the street—he might have bought damaged ones. It is the custom of the various parasites to stand in rows in front of the terrace of the Continental, pushing their wares through the balustrade as ladies poke their parasols into monkey-cages at the Zoo. The monkeys in this cage are fairly safe from the attention of postcard-sellers, newspaper-boys and dragomans, and, without moving from their exalted position, they may examine and buy Syrian picture-frames, ostrich feathers, bead necklaces, fly-switches, hippopotamus-hide sticks and whips, lace, braces, beans, pastry, suspenders, tarbushes, air-balloons, birds in cages, roses, narcissi, carnations, hyacinths, coat-stretchers, Indian boxes, and, when they are on the market, leopards and boa-constrictors. . . .

If you want to encounter the postcard- and paper-boys you must go down into the street, first refusing the services of two or three dozen dragomans who wish to take you

that very instant to the Siwa Oasis or the Peninsula of Sinai, both of which mean journeys for weeks on camels. Of course you do not wish to come to a decision of such magnitude while you are only on your way to buy a newspaper, so you mutter some feeble excuse about going to-morrow perhaps, or something like that, and pass on to the pavement. There is an instant rush of boys for you, all waving papers at you. "You buy *Egypt*, *Egyptian Gazette*, *Egyptian Standard*, *Spinkiss*, good paper for Cairo—nice one? *Daily Mail* comes from London—yes, nice *Paris New York Herald*, Mr. American?" You buy a paper—papers are cheap in Egypt, a halfpenny one only costs a penny farthing—and having one in your hand secures you the right to breathe for a minute or two before the postcard-sellers have organised their campaign. The Cairo postcards are fascinating. But the same postcards cost you anything from three piastres to six piastres a dozen, according to your ignorance. I never saw more charming coloured postcards; there is one of the tombs of the Caliphs which makes you believe that the Caliphs are still going, and that all the talk about the Khedive and the British Occupation is mere moonshine. The Egyptian sunset is introduced into nearly all of them with the very best effect. Most people suffer from postcard fever badly for about a week. I never got over it.

Every postcard-dealer tries to thrust a collection into your hands. He wants to know how many dozen you'll take, offering them at twice the price he means to accept. If you could have one dealer at once in a quiet corner you might enjoy the inspection, but you are the victim of trade rivalries, in which there is one advantage—that the rivals are perfectly shameless about cutting down each other's prices.

You begin to think that the dragomans, clean, handsome men, with charming manners and robes of silk, or spotless white with fine black cloaks, are very nice, though they do want to hurry you to the uttermost ends of Egypt.

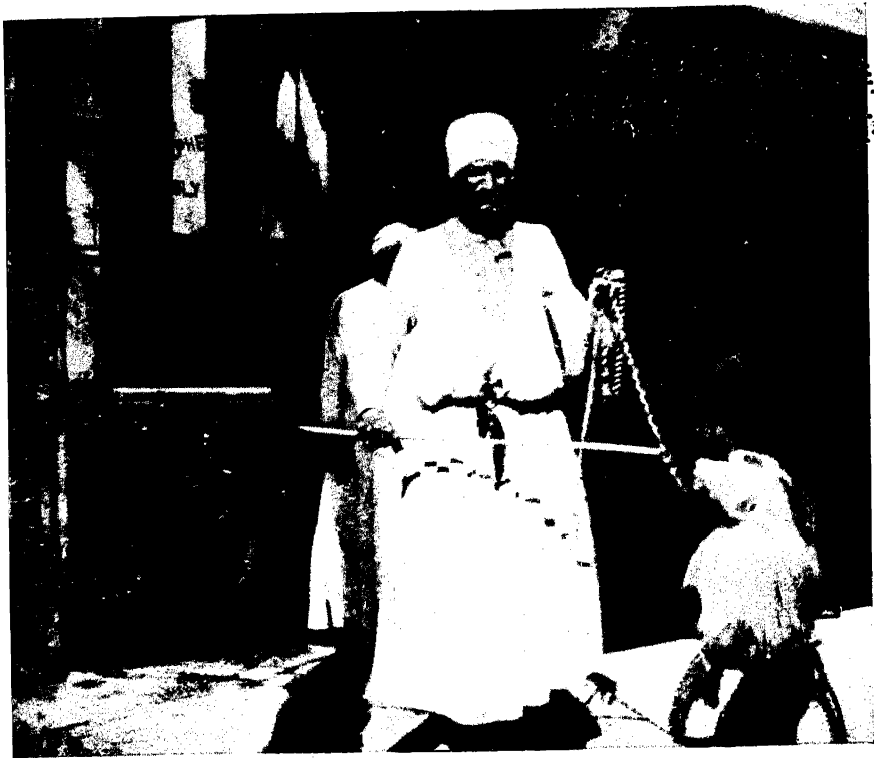
The boys who attack you with "I say matchess" are very persistent. They consider that every foreigner ought to be

smoking. While I was expostulating with one I felt my hand taken in a confiding way in cool, soft fingers. I looked round to see who my friend was, and found that it was a huge dog-faced baboon, with grey chinchilla-like fur, the exact counterpart of the baboon which plays such a prominent part in the Judgment of Osiris, and is among the mischievous monsters of the under-world combated by Osiris in his passage. There is a row of them painted in one of the tombs of the Pharaohs, all using their tails as the third leg of a tripod seat. The Arabs speak of it familiarly as the "seenosefarl"—I am spelling phonetically. He was an appalling-looking beast; he looked like a bad-tempered gorilla. But his master indicated that I ought not to be frightened. He said: "Good monkey—shake hand—like to say good-bye to you." It is rather the Nubian's habit to say good-bye when he means how-do-you-do? I ought to have felt flattered: this was a very grand monkey, with a little Sardinian donkey to ride and various weapons and accoutrements for taking soldier-parts in his performances. The discouraging part of it was that nobody ever wanted to see him perform, though they paid piastres to photograph him as he rode along the street in the little red flannel trousers which a well-meaning American missionary of the female sex had given him. This garment certainly does make a "seenosefarl" look more presentable, and is tolerably true to Nature. For one thing I was grateful to that baboon; he established the accuracy of the artists of the Pharaohs, who always represent him balanced on his tail in the attitude of a living chair. When he was not on his donkey, and had nothing particular to do, he always sat on the rim of his tambourine in the correct Pharaonic attitude.

I took two or three kodaks of him, and he showed a far greater objection to having his photograph taken than the lax Egyptian-Mohammedan shows. He was a sulky performer at best, who took no such interest in his work as that shown by the lemur monkey which rode about the streets on a goat.

The snake-charmers were very jealous of the master of the





THE CYNOCEPHAL,

The performing dog-faced baboon in the trousers made for him by the American lady missionary. This is the animal which occurs in all the pictures of the Judgment of Osiris. It is standing in the Street of the Camel.



**WOMAN CARRYING A HUGE IRON CAULDRON ON HER HEAD**  
**In the Sharia Camel, the principal street of Cairo, just outside the Hôtel Continental**

"seenosefari" ; they did not see why their serpents—cobras about seven feet long—had not as good a right to perform on the pavement of the principal streets as his baboon. But this was one thing which the police would not allow, though they had no objection to a turkey-herd driving four or five turkeys along the pavement as the easiest way to take them for some hotel's dinner, or a man walking about carrying two armchairs for sale.

The street tumblers, in the approved acrobat's dress of skin-coloured tights, with a red velvet join between the legs and the body, were far more insistive, because nobody wanted them. That they should turn cart-wheels in front of people, who merely wanted to get along quickly to Cook's, and were compelled to pass Shephcard's Hotel, seemed to give no one any pleasure.

The actual hawkers are chiefly Egyptians or Nubians. The people of third-class nations in the Turkish Empire and the Balkans, or of no particular nationality, are too proud to be seen hawking—their profession is swindling. But some of them are good for the street from the kodaker's point of view. Albanians and Montenegrins, for instance, are inclined to high boots and an armoury in their waist-belts. If you stood on the steps of the Continental you might see specimens of fifty different nations in a morning, including many citizens of our Indian Empire intent on selling you sandal-wood boxes and the embroideries of the universe.

Later in the year, when the season in Upper Egypt is over, a fresh crowd of entertainers arrive—the people who have been selling pillaged and fabricated antiquities to the tourists on Cook's Nile steamers. They are at once more original and more picturesque ; they vary from dragomans as immaculate in their dress as Members of Parliament, to Arabs in the *fellahin* station of life from the villages round Der-el-Bahari. All antiquities, which pretend to Pharaonic antiquity, are supposed to come from Der-el-Bahari, which is devoted to tombs and renowned for the richness of its treasure-troves. Feeling that it could not supply the world for ever

with the mere accumulations of the past, eager and industrious Der-el-Bahari has started manufactories for producing the same kind of *objets*. But as there is a prejudice against modern scarabs and mummy-beads, these manufactories are kept as private as unlicensed whiskey-stills in Ireland. There is, however, no exciseman to confiscate these privately produced antiquities; so they are sold openly at Der-el-Bahari itself, and Luxor, and anywhere else where the tourist can be induced to take any interest in beads and beetles.

It gave me genuine pleasure when I was having tea one afternoon in April, on the terrace of the Continental, to see so many old swindlers of my acquaintance from Upper Egypt. To do them justice, most of them recognised me. They did not ask me to buy their wares as genuine; they only said in an unobtrusive way, "Do you want any?" meaning did I want to buy any as imitations or ornaments.

And here I think that people make a great mistake. Many of these scarabs and mummy-beads and blue saucers and little gods, which make no pretence of being genuine except to the "mug" class of tourists, are objects of great beauty and distinctly desirable as ornaments. Furthermore, if you only pay their market value as imitations, they are preposterously cheap. I bought a lot of them, intending to give them away to people with a savage taste for bright ornaments about their persons, when I got home. But, when I did get home, I kept nearly all of them. A bright blue scarab is much more ornamental to hang on the end of a blind-cord than a nutmeg of turned boxwood.

Some of these deceivers, of course, had not met me on the plain of Thebes, or the causeway to Sakkara, and started trying to deceive me in the Street of the Camel at Cairo. The first offered me a scarab for £2. I confess that I am unable to detect a well-forged scarab. Some of the most valuable scarabs in the Cairo Museum look like clumsy and garish forgeries. But I knew that if he offered it to me for only £2 it must be a forgery, so I offered him two piastres for it. He said, "Don't pay me now. Take it to the Museum, and if they say it is a forgery I will give you £10."

This man had not got £10, and had never had £10, and never would have £10, and he knew that if I took it to the Museum the director would sweep it away in instant contempt. But he thought that if he "bluffed" me like this, I might try to buy it from him for some smaller price, a pound, or ten shillings, or even two shillings. But I said, "For an imitation one piastre is enough. But this is a very cleverly made imitation, so I will give you two for it. Do not bother me any more until you wish to take two piastres." Of course he picked me up farther down the street and let me have it for two piastres; he was making a hundred per cent on it, or more, and probably had a pocketful.

I may have readers so unfamiliar with Egypt as to have to ask what scarabs are. Scarabs are the little beetles made of glazed earthenware, or stones like cornelian and amethyst, which in the case of the former always bear the cartouche or oval name-hieroglyphic of the person for whom they were made. All are singularly faithful copies of a real beetle still to be found in Egypt.

The tiny statues of the gods—only an inch or two long many of them—are much easier to convict if they are chipped, for the colour which a chip assumes after twenty or thirty centuries is totally different from an artificially coloured chip; and the glaze itself, even when buried in the dry sand of Egypt, goes a bit grey in that immense period of time. These little gods are absolutely fascinating. They are mostly blue or green, and the animal heads, of ape or ibis or hippopotamus or what not, make them the quaintest little things. In museums you find them of bronze or, occasionally, gold; but even the bronze seldom pass into the hands of the humbler curio-dealers. There are plenty of genuine earthenware gods in the Cairo shops, but the street hawkers do not offer them much even in imitations. They incline more to rather ingenious forgeries, made, in a coarse, effective style, of clay, about six inches long, of which the real value is a small piastre, a penny farthing, each, but which the guileless American sometimes purchases at two hundred and forty times the proper price. They

are also much addicted to excellent imitations of the little wooden images of slaves and scribes which were buried with the dead. It is only their perfectness and the fact that they are not in museums which make you suspect them. Gay pieces of mummy-cases, and small mummies like hawks or cats, are also popular temptations for these street antiquaries to produce from their bosoms

Some of the antiquity-sellers I had known at Thebes had the good grace to bring out pocket handkerchiefs full of genuine antiquities (they carry their whole stock-in-trade in pocket handkerchiefs) and offer them to me at the prices we had established in many bargains. I am not ashamed to confess that I bought many forgeries that afternoon as ornaments, because, when I had come down from Luxor I regretted that I had not done this.

It was rather droll to see the paraphernalia of mummy hawks, and mummy arms, and little plaques of rough clay a few inches long, with religious emblems on them, and blue saucers, and bits of mummy cases and mummy linen, and beads and *ushapti* images and wooden archers and barques of the dead, spread out on the pavement round the corner from Shephard's Hotel. But the Berberine from Assuan was more daringly human in his designs on the guileless tourist, for he encumbered the entrance to the leading photographer's with rows of battle-axes and maces and assegais and stray bits of armour which were supposed to have come from Abyssinia, and by others supposed to have been manufactured in Birmingham. You could have selected a set of railings for a respectable-sized garden out of his collection, which would have made the finest park railings decorated with the fasces of a Roman lictor look tame.

The Berberine bead-boys buzz round worse than ever now, though there are always a sufficiency of them on Cairo pavements. They wear every species of preposterous and un-African-looking glass beads. The odd thing is that, though these beads are of English and German manufacture, the inhabitants of Nubia adore them and decorate their persons with them whenever they can afford them, so that if you

dared to buy them you would be the possessor of an African's fancy if not of his handiwork.

When the blue-gowned agriculturists from Thebes, who claim to have dug up all their wares with their own hands, while they were cultivating the soil of Der-el-Bahari—certainly the only kind of cultivating they were likely to do was robbing tombs—when these Upper Egyptians, I say, began to infest the pavement in front of the Continental, this favourite promenade of the lounge of the Cairo season no longer swarmed with Americans in expensive flannels—which offered no suggestion of participation in active sport—and super-dressed Americanesses. Their couriers had told them that it was time for all self-respecting tourists to be out of Egypt. The pavement had quite a deserted appearance, for though there were plenty of “the best English people” in Cairo on their way back from the Equator and the Bahr-el-Ghazal and other winter resorts which they affect, they do not favour the promenade in front of the Continental—they hardly ever pass it except when they are on the way to Cook's, the universal banker of travellers in Egypt.

To tourists who insist on the company of other tourists Cairo grows dull as April grows old, but there are others who rejoice to see the city return to its normal condition. It is interesting for a little while to see this part of the city looking as if it was arranged for the stage of the Gaiety. Then if you are easily bored you get tired of the army of performing parrots and the vulgarians for whom they cater, and the noise and the bustle and the garishness and the banality.

But I am not easily bored with the human comedy, and I could go on being amused by the buffooneries of the “Continental” pavement, just as I was never tired of watching the poor playing at being back in the Middle Ages in the Arab city.

## CHAPTER III

### The Humours of the Esbekiya

THE Esbekiya, which lends its name to doubtful proceedings, is believed to be a garden. It certainly has railings, which are among the accepted features of a garden, and you pay to go into it, the penny-farthing small piastre. Also there are some trees, some grass, and some birds—crows and others. Here the resemblance ends except that nursemaids use it.

Why it is not a garden in a land where anything will grow with a little water (which they have on the spot) Heaven knows—perhaps if Cairo had a municipality<sup>1</sup> its public gardens would have flowers. But the Law of Capitulations, or the religious law of the Mohammedans, or something, stands in the way of there being a Municipality, so the Esbekiya instead of being a glorious tangle of tropical vegetation, like the gardens at the Delta Barrage, is like the dullest bit of Hyde Park—railings and all. The railings are the most popular part of it, as will be seen hereafter.

Not so many years ago it was a *birket*, which means that it was a pool of stagnant water, whenever the Nile was high enough to soak into it. At other times it was a sort of common, where they held popular festivals like the Birthday of the Prophet. Traces of its *birket* days remain in a meandering ditch, which serves to collect mosquitoes, and to show that it is not the water difficulty which prevents the

<sup>1</sup> The Cairo Municipality may be a *fait accompli* by the time that these words see the light.







A TRAVELING DONKEY-BOYS' RESTAURANT ON THE PAVEMENT OUTSIDE THE ESBEKIVA GARDENS.

desert from flowering as a rose. Once a week an Egyptian regimental band plays in the Esbekiya. An Egyptian regimental band is like a very bad German band, who have forgotten the rules of the European music which they play. But more nursemaids pay their penny-farthings when the band is there ; and Greek tradesmen take their wives to it, and expand like dusty frogs in front of the bandstand, where Pharaoh's Guards play *The Geisha* in Koran time.

The Esbekiya has its inspired moments, in the very early morning, when only nice natural natives as simple as wild animals are about, and the big falcons sail over it with their musical twitter of *prée-o-lo, préé-o-lo*, and the Egyptian doves coo in the tops of the palm-trees.

But I love the Esbekiya—the outside of it ; its pavement and its park railings, as exhibitions of native life rank next to the bazars. The primitive native employed in the European city loves them. He can do all his little foolings and shoppings there, except on the side which faces the Continental Hotel. For some reason that is almost deserted. His favourite piece faces the street called in Cairo Directories the Sharia el-Genaina. You could write a whole book about the sights of this two hundred yards of pavement if you had rooms opposite, as we once had.

It begins with a donkey-boys' stand opposite the American Mission dépôt. Perhaps the donkeys consent to stand there, so that their masters, when they don't need them, may step across and study English. Donkey-boys always go to the American Mission school, where, I fancy, they must be taught free. They do it without any view of improving their future state. Most of them remain unbaptised. There is little traffic in the street, or it would be seriously incommoded. The donkey-boys treat it as their own. The forage camels dump huge stacks of green *berseem* on to the road for the asses' dinners ; the asses lie about the road and the pavement ; or stand with two feet on the curbstone and two in the gutter, showing their contempt for any one who might be inclined to hire them ; and the people who subsist on the patronage of donkey-boys, such as peripatetic

restaurateurs and peripatetic dealers in turquoises, take up any of the pavement that the donkeys are not using. Every self-respecting donkey-boy wears a turquoise ring with a turquoise the size of a plum-stone, for luck, and offers to sell it to every foreigner who looks at it. As the price, if the setting is silver, is about three shillings, it follows that turquoises and jewellers' labour are cheap. The inexperienced may give him double this price. In any case, he is always selling rings, and therefore always buying them. The turquoise-seller has a flat case, which would do equally well for selling sweets except for its glass lid, and the stones he sells are generally dome-shaped, soft, low-grade stones of a delightful Cambridge blue. Sometimes they are set in silver rings of charming workmanship, for which three shillings seems a ridiculously low price. Sometimes they remain in the gilt brass rings in which they came from Arabia. Agate and cornelian are almost too cheap to sell.

The pavement restaurant is one of the most fascinating bits of native life. The man who keeps it has a circular tray a yard and a half across, with rings of bread stuck on nails all round the rim, and little blue-and-white china bowls filled with various kinds of sauces and pickles taking up most of the area, the rest being devoted to unpromising parts of meat hushed up in batter. Donkey-boys eat very nicely. It is quite a pretty sight to see them squatting like birds round this tray, dipping their bread in the sauces. They often bring their own bread, looking like puffed-up muffins, and buy pieces of pickle or fry and put them inside the bread as if it was a bag. If there is a bottle standing on the tray at all, it will contain vinegar. The donkey-boy does not drink with his meals. He waits till he passes a fountain where he can get a drink of water for nothing. I used to wonder that the restaurateur had not moved nearer to the pump or the suck-tap. The suck-tap is a great institution in Egypt. It does away with the necessity for a fountain and saucer, which might be stolen. You put your lips, that is to say, the Egyptian pauper puts his lips, to a sort of brass teat let into a wall. The poor Egyptian is not

troubled with sanitary forebodings. I have seen one take his child to have a drink of green water out of a ditch at Marg.

The donkey-boys invite custom for the moment, and, for the entire period of his stay in Cairo, from every foreigner who passes. But I never saw a foreigner hire one. A donkey costs a foreigner as much as a cab and a pair of horses. You can take this carriage and pair a short distance for sevenpence-halfpenny, and any distance in the town for a shilling and a half-penny. The donkey-boys are not discouraged. If you will not ride their donkey they ask you to photograph it, which implies a small piastre. You feel inclined to photograph every donkey you see in Cairo; they are dear white beasts, clipped as close as a horse, and beautifully kept. Their saddles are of red brocade, and they usually have a silver necklace with blue beads. The donkey-boy seems unnecessary; the donkey looks wise enough to hire himself out and take the money. I wonder they don't have donkeys which start off when you put a piastre in the slot, and stop of their own accord when the time is up.

Just beyond the *donkey-vous* is one of the chief ornaments of the Esbekiya—the row of postcard-sellers who make shops of the railings. Here they hang up side by side the most incongruous pictures—oleographs of Levantine saints surrounded by indecent postcards, and postcards of Cairo in every variety, plain and coloured; oleographs of the Massacre of the Mamelukes and incidents in the Greek War of Independence vie with those of the Madonna and St. Catherine. The real business is done in questionable postcards.

Then succeed a variety of trades, noticeable among them the man who combines the business of rag-picker and sugar-candy seller. The tray of sugar-candy stands on a sort of cage, in which he puts the treasures he collects from dust-heaps. It is not a nice combination, but he has plenty of rivals in the sweet trade, all at popular prices; the Arab has a sweet tooth. One man brings a huge cheese of nougat; many have trays of Turkish delight and caramels resting on the coping; and occasionally the man comes who has a

stick of Edinburgh rock several feet high, striped like a barber's pole. But he prefers the *rond-pont* in the Musky, or the Market of the Afternoon.

Early in the season there were Nubians squatting on the pavement with mandarin oranges piled like cannon-balls on the pavement in front of them, ten for a penny farthing. The nut and dried-bean sellers had to have costermongers' trucks: their wares were so numerous. The chestnut roasters pleased me very much. The Esbekiya is surrounded by young trees, which have circular spaces about a yard wide cut in the pavement to receive them. To guard their roots, these spaces are covered with gratings except for a few inches round the trunk. The chestnut-seller lights his fire in this hole, which is as good as a stove, no one interferes with him or sees any harm in it. The trees don't seem to mind it either: perhaps they are glad of the warmth in the winter. At night the coffee-sellers and the men who sell cups of hot sago bring their steaming wares here; but they have proper stoves and do not use the gratings.

The whipmakers, who congregate on the G.P.O. side, prefer a tree with palings to tie their lashes to while they are being plaited, and to hang them on for sale. This is a great place for cabs, and the Arab cabman uses his whip the whole time. Whenever he breaks it he drives furiously up to a whipmaker, who hands him a new one, as a groom hands a fresh club to a polo player in the middle of a *chukker*. No money passes, just as no money passes when the cabman dashes up to the candle-seller at lighting-up time; but I am sure that the humble vendor only keeps his books in his head.

The Arab shops in the street more than most people. The Esbekiya railings are a rent-free shop in a busy thoroughfare; uncommonly handy for displaying a two-penny-half-penny stock-in-trade. Everything the unsophisticated native requires is here. The barber sits on the railings while his patients stand patiently in front of him to have their heads shaved. The tailor sometimes hangs his temptations on the railings, but more often keeps them folded on his shoulders.



A PAVEMENT STALL OUTSIDE THE ESBFKIYA GARDENS



THREE ARAB EFFENDIS SITTING DOWN TO REST ON THE PAVEMENT OUTSIDE THE  
ESBEKIYA GARDENS



The poor Arab tries his coat on in the street, and would doubtless try his trousers on if he ever wore them. It would not signify; he would be sure to wear his other rig underneath. He likes his coats dark and thick and thoroughly unsuitable to the climate. The *tarbûsh*-seller pleased me much more. He had an engaging habit of fitting fifty or a hundred *tarbûshes*, one inside the other, forming a column several feet high, which he carried in front of him balanced like a Highlander balancing his caber for tossing. You live in a pleasing expectation of his throwing them over his head to see how far they will go, like his Caledonian prototype. He might just as well, for all the custom he seems to get. But perhaps he is only an advertisement.

None of the professions of the Esbekiya interested me more than that of the fortune-tellers. Sometimes they were men. More often they were Nubian females of uncertain age, whose faces were closely veiled, though their hunched-up, skinny legs were bare to the knee. They sat in the attitude of stage witches. Sometimes they told fortunes with cards, but more often with desert sand spread on a cloth. Perhaps it was only street sand, but I preferred to think that it came from the desert. Fortune-telling itself was not interesting to those who did not understand it. The witch made cabalistic marks in the dust with her claw of a finger till it looked as if poultry had been walking on it. Then she shook it up or smoothed it with her palms and began again, clawing, muttering calculations, and staring at her handiwork in rapt contemplation. She asked few questions, and her prophecies were terse. If the believer, who was consulting her, was someone as poor as herself it looked all right, but if he happened to be an *effendi* in handsome Arab robes or a prosperous Cairo tradesman in a frock-coat and black trousers, yellow boots, and a *tarbûsh*, who wished to consult the oracle before he embarked on an important business-deal, he tempted the humorist as he squatted like a frog on the pavement, much in the way of *bedawins* in cloaks of sack and gorgeous head-dresses flying past with a desert stride; or fat-tailed lambs for the passover, or other incidents of Cairo traffic.

I have often photographed such a party without being noticed.

But if a poor and primitive native was consulting the soothsayer, and the darkness had fallen, and the traffic had ceased, the sight was truly impressive, especially in contrast to the cafés opposite. The Sharia el-Genaina has a row of cafés for Arabs and mean whites, because they can hear the music coming round the corner from the cross street, the most blatant in Cairo. These cafés were not interesting; people really went to them for refreshment; most of them only bought their drinks from the café and their doubtful delicacies from the peripatetic restaurateurs. There was one rather amazing café along here: it was kept by a retired British sergeant, who had married a Greek woman, and was the favourite resort of Tommy Atkins. We had rooms over that café once, so I am in a position to give it a character. The Tommies who frequented it never made any particular noise except with their sing-songs; the women who served them were good enough for Grundy, and the place had a reputation for decent liquor. The most striking feature was the number of Tommies who could play the accompaniment to the latest music-hall and comic-opera songs, and play with *verve*. It was a sort of concert by the audience. It gave me a great idea of Tommy Atkins.

The street behind the Sharia el-Genaina, the Sharia Wagh-el-Birket, and the cross street which joined them, are the most unblushing in Cairo, except the parades of the Fishmarket. But the Sharia Wagh-el-Birket is picturesque in its way, for one side of it is taken up by arcades with compromising cafés under them, and the other has its upper floors tenanted by gay women who aspire to the better-class. Every floor has its balcony, and every balcony has its fantastically robed Juliet leaning over. As the street, in spite of its glare, is not well-lighted, you cannot see how displeasing they are; you get a mere impression of light draperies trailing from lofty balconies under the lustrous night blue of Egypt, while from the rooms behind lamps with rose-coloured shades diffuse invitations.

In this street is the famous café with the female band who are said to be white slaves ; perhaps they are ; they would not please any one but an Egyptian. The Arabs like drinking their beer there , possibly on the same principle as it is the chief ambition of the negroes of the United States to have a white servant.

Not far from the Clot Bey end of the Sharia Wagh-el-Birket lies the Fishmarket, the worst of the purlieus of the Esbekiya, the gay quarter of Cairo, to which I have referred elsewhere I have never seen such a repulsive place ; the houses are squalid ; the women are most of them appalling ; they positively flame with crimson paint and brass jewellery and have eyes flashing with every kind of mineral decoration and stimulant, and far too much flesh. If you walk through the Fishmarket when they are prowling for victims, your clothes are nearly torn off in the agonised attempts to secure your attention There are the usual accompaniments of drink and mechanical music, and police

How different to the Yoshiwahas of Japan, with their quiet, and their perfect orderliness, and the fairy-like beauty of their surroundings. I know nothing so like fairyland as a street in the Yoshiwara overhanging the bay of Tokyo, with its fantastic architecture, its exquisite gardens, and its human butterflies. There you are never solicited ; you are welcome to enjoy the artistic beauties of the scene, and go, if you do not wish for more.

Business claims part of the Esbekiya, which has a couple of well-known hotels, the Eden and the Bristol, and a couple of pensions, the Suisse and the Anglaise, overlooking it. The shops are mostly like an Edgware Road bazar, with articles of cheap value and often of cheap price. But there is one notable exception in the corner occupied by Walker & Meimarachi, the Harlots of Egypt. And further on is the Post Office with a fresh crop of street idiosyncrasies.

The buildings here are new and un-Egyptian, but the illiteracy of the land dashes in the local colour. Facing the Post Office are a row of seal-makers and scribes. To

the man who cannot write a seal is a signature, and ninety per cent of the population of Egypt cannot write. The opening for scribes is obvious, and in their train come a fresh row of small dealers in stationery—people who sell abominable paper at a few pence a packet and half-penny pencils for a penny. But they have an interesting assortment of cheap notebooks, a matter of moment to one who was never without a notebook in his pocket in a country like Egypt. The modernity of Egypt is represented by the wet rollers hanging up outside the Post Office for people who are against licking stamps. I doubt if either London or Paris has got so far on the road to civilisation in this particular detail.

Here there is a big Arab café of the kind where they never seem to be doing anything; where the waiters might be dead, and the customers seem to be asleep, or at all events not taking anything but a newspaper. It is really quite a popular institution; it is so good for watching funerals. It commands one of the great avenues of Cairo—that which leads up from the Opera House, which also is on the Esbekiya, to the Citadel—from the purely European Ismailiya quarter to the mediæval Arab city. This is a great street for processions. I saw all sorts, the strangest being a *bedawin* village on the march, with men and their wives and all their belongings, including enormous carpets, piled up on camels. The women sat on the top of the luggage and looked as if they were going to fall off; the men had their camels to themselves; and the whole of them rode past the Continental Hotel and the Opera House, in the middle of motors and furiously driven *arabeaks*, as if they were out in the desert with not another human being in sight. It was really rather majestic.

I forgot the entertainments of the Esbekiya Garden. There is a kind of open-air theatre, half café, where they have some sort of melancholy performance occasionally. Once in a way there is a sort of fair. But the only time that Cairo Society ever enters this lackadaisical garden is when the General Commanding the Army of Occupation

orders all the regimental bands to go and play there for the benefit of some charity. The regimental officers go with them, that is, they think it is the correct thing to be present, and Cairo Society follows in their train. As it is always at night, when the electric light lends a glamour, the forlorn Esbekiya looks, with its smart soldiers and well-dressed women, like the Champs Elysées. In many ways Cairo is a spasmodic imitation of Paris.

NOTE.—The types described in this and the following chapter are depicted inimitably by Mr. Lance Thackeray in his *The People of Egypt*, just published by A. & C. Black.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Approach to the Native City: The Ataba-el-Khadra and the Musky

WHEN the kodaker goes to the Ataba-el-Khadra he finds a fresh lot of subjects. All Egypt seems to be eating sugar-cane, while there is any, and nowhere is one more conscious of this than in the Ataba-el-Khadra, where any Egyptian pauper, who isn't munching it, is selling it.

The Ataba-el-Khadra is the epitome of the unmediæval and unlovely native life. Here, instead of spending their lives in doing next to nothing for next to nothing in a dignified and picturesque way, every one is hurrying or tout-ing. There are a few immense shops kept by German Jews, which tempt the native issuing from the Musky with resplendent European hosiery; a jostle of nearly all the trams in Cairo—this being their chief starting-point; a crowd of *arabeahs* and donkeys; and an ever-changing crowd of natives trying to sell European articles to each other, or to clean each other's boots.

Here the real native life begins. Women in black, showing hardly anything of themselves except their ankleted legs, are getting in and out of absurd native omnibuses; here the pedlars are more numerous than the pedlars in front of the Continental, but they cater for a different class. Stuffed crocodiles would be no use to Egyptian paupers with only small piastres in their pockets. Here they are more practical. You see a man looking like a human hedgehog, with bristles of brushes and combs and hat-racks



NEWSPAPER-BOY SELLING SEDITIOUS PERIODICALS TO THE PEOPLE IN THE TRAMS IN THE  
ATABA-EL-KHADRA.



THE CORNER OF THE ATABA-EL-KHADRA AND THE MUSKY.

In the foreground are the boy shoeblacks—the original street Arabs. To the right is a peripatetic draper.



and sponges and button-hooks and braces and bootlaces and blue glasses and anything in the turnery department. Walking-sticks are very popular here, too, but the dealers in them would not do much business in hippopotamus-hide sticks and riding-switches. Here they are very particular, they want dressy-looking canes. Every Arab who is above the rank of a porter carries a cane; it is as much a badge of respectability as wearing shoes.

The two leading industries are selling pastry and selling Nationalist newspapers. Arabs make delicious pastry and sell it like hot cakes.

The shoeblack is quite a feature of Cairo, and especially of the Ataba-el-Khadra. The Arabs seem to go to the big café at the corner of the Musky not to order things from the establishment but to have their ridiculous boots cleaned. They are generally brown, somewhere, even if their tops are sky-blue. The little shoe-browns who clean them might have been the origin of our term *street Arabs*—they are noisy, mischievous, cussed, independent, and inefficient. While their patrons are waiting for them to begin, they are turning the whole pavement into a scrambling and gambling hell, making dives for each other at the risk of torpedoing short-sighted foot-passengers, and every other person in Egypt is short of sight in some way. He may only be in need of powerful spectacles, or he may be minus an eye altogether, having lost it in defending himself from having to defend his country. When they do at length clean their patron's boots they stain them with a brown fluid and are satisfied at seeing the boot change its colour. They only use their brushes to throw at each other.

This café at the corner is full, at any hour of the day, of Arabs patronising it in their own way. As I have said elsewhere, when the Arab goes to a café he does anything rather than order coffee—he generally does nothing, or reads a paper, or plays dominoes—the only thing he is likely to do for the good of the house is to hire a pipe. The Arab's pipe is so inconveniently large that he has to hire one or hire a man to carry his own if he smokes a pipe

out of doors, for he cannot carry the hose and the water jar about himself.

This café is at the point where the Musky debouches, the artery up which the natives come when their business takes them to the European city, and down which the Europeans go when they invade the bazar. Here, as soon as the weather grows hot, the ranks of the hawkers are swelled by an army of ice-cream sellers, lemonade-sellers, water-sellers, and sponge and loofah sellers. The clang of the trams and the water-sellers never ceases; the fly-whisk sellers are incessant.

The Ataba-el-Khadra is a wonderfully busy place; there is a never-ending stream of tramways and native buses and native funerals, and people hurrying to the trams, and forage camels, and porters carrying enough for a camel. The forage camels and the stone carts knock against everything; they have really good opportunities, for the tramways start from haphazard places, so every one is staring at the tram-boards. To see this sport at its best you must choose a day when it has rained several hours. Cairo can be quite a rainy city; has not Pierre Loti written that the barrages are ruining its climate? and an Irish M.P. said, "The Assuan dam is making a damn mess of its climate"? Egyptian mud is worse than Egyptian darkness. The dust in which Egypt is so prolific readily makes a fine paste, which may be spread over the foot-path as well as the road to the depth of several inches. While you are wading through this hasty-pudding to catch a tram which only goes once in half an hour, and shows signs of wanting to go without you, and another tram is bearing down upon you on each side, you are nearly knocked down every minute by carts laden with building materials driven by men almost blind with ophthalmia, camels with stacks of green forage on their backs, flocks of passover sheep, galloping cabs, and reckless motors. Then you learn the full capabilities of forage camels. All the cabmen and donkey-boys lunch their animals on green forage, and camels with stacks on their backs slouch in

over the Nile bridge all the day long to supply them. They come nicely into a kodak, but they are not nice for anything else.

In the Ataba-el-Khadra every one who is not trying to catch a tram or fly across it in an *arabeah*, is standing about, whether he is porter on the edge of the market waiting for a job, with a knot of rope over his shoulder and a blue gown down to his ancles, or a *bedawin* sheikh. The firemen of the big fire-station on the Ataba generally go to sleep on the pavement. The *occupation* of Egypt, as Sir Eldon Gorst said, is going to sleep in unsuitable places. No place can be too unsuitable. The poor Egyptian will go to sleep in any place at any time. He will even sleep in the road in Cairo, trusting to the traffic's avoiding him. The gutter is a very favourite place; it is as dry as anywhere else, and the sleeper cannot roll off it as he might off the railings of the Esbekiya. But he uses the pavement most. It was sometimes quite difficult to get along on account of the number of men lying about with their faces covered like corpses, sleeping as soundly as the dead. It would have reminded me of Messina if I had gone to Egypt after the earthquake. And the Egyptian takes his siesta in the morning as well as the afternoon.

The Egyptian adapts himself to circumstances. I saw an Egyptian adapting himself to circumstances in the Ataba-el-Khadra, which is the most public place in the town, by taking off his trousers because it was raining. He was afraid of spoiling them.

It is only in really native streets that your way is blocked up with fat-tailed sheep except at the Greek Passover. The Arab loves to keep a fat-tailed sheep tied up outside his shop. Why, I never could learn, but the dragomans thought it was to eat the garbage like a pig. In any case the fat-tailed sheep is a disgusting object even when it is painted in stripes and wears a silver necklace with a child's shoe tied to it. Its tail is like a bladderful of melted lard.

If the Ataba is a tangle of trams, buses, carriages, donkeys, camels, firemen, soldiers, police, pedlars, sugar-

cane-sellers and *bedawin*, it has at any rate a certain spaciousness which is denied to the Musky.

The kodaker will have plenty of time to photograph the humours of the Musky even if he is driving, for the traffic is never untangled. The Musky of Cairo is a familiar name to many who have never, and will never set foot in the city. It was once, in the days before the flood—of tourists, the principal shopping street of Cairo; it is still the chief avenue leading down to the native city, and not so many years ago was full of picturesque native houses

Now it is as shoddy as it is squashy. Where it debouches into the Ataba it has shops like the hosiers' and jewellers' in the Strand would be if they were kept by Levantines. But as it approaches the bazars it gets lower and lower in the scale of commerce. What scanty remains there are of the old mansions are faced with shallow shops of the toy, button, and baby-ribbon type; shops where German socks with undeveloped heels and music-hall umbrellas are flanked with scarlet cotton handkerchiefs and shoes on strings, shops of slop-tailors and chemists who live by the sale of noxious drugs and other less reputable commodities, for chemists cannot live by drugs alone in the Musky. *Tarbāsh*-sellers of course there are: that stamps a cheap street.

There are almost as many stalls as there are shops, though there is no room in the street at all; the most popular are the spectacle stalls—spectacles are almost as much part of the costume as watches and chains in Egypt. Stalls for nougat, Turkish delight, Arab sugar, small cucumbers and oranges, lemonade, boots and shoes, idiotic cutlery, coffee cups and glasses, turquoises and mousetraps are their nearest rivals.

The street is absolutely packed with Arabs flowing from their city to goodness knows where. They are all of them incapable of getting out of your way, and the worst are the women, whether they are Egyptians with veiled faces and rather unveiled legs, or the pretty Arish women, who have skirts like trousers coming right over their feet but leave their faces uncovered except for jewellery. The Egyptian woman is content to adorn her face with the little gilt

cylinder which joins her veils. But the Arish woman is not content unless she has a silver head-band with a row of little chains falling down on each side, half-concealing her face, or a necklace of two or three strings of huge gold and coral beads, and another string tied round her forehead. She is addicted to fine bracelets also, and her bare face is often very pretty.

Alternating with the women are porters carrying anything from a piano downwards, lemonade-sellers, men with ladders, forage camels, sheikhs on donkeys, and friends walking two or three abreast, only concerned with their conversation. Not only the pavement but the whole street is full of them and looks as if it would congeal if it were not for the *arabeah* drivers, who charge them like snow-ploughs, crying, "*Owar riglak!*" In the midst of all the shoddy shops and stalls, here and there a noble Mameluke gateway, which once had a mansion behind it, rears its head. But the whole effect is one of cheap shops kept by Greeks, to which the European goes for certain odds and ends, and the native for cheap splendour in his apparel. Where a Mameluke house still survives it has generally been hopelessly transformed.

Until he gets close down to the bazar there is nothing to make the tourist put his hand in his pocket. At first the shops have fairly good stocks. Mingled with jewellers' are shops where boots and hosiery, fly-whisks and footballs, dispute priority. The traffic of carriages, carts, porters, native women, lemonade-sellers, and sheep is inconceivable. You would never get through it unless your coachman with a yell of "*Owar riglak,*" which means "mind your legs," charged the crowd with his game little Arab horses. The effect is much heightened if you get a shower of rain, which turns any street in Cairo into a lake of mud in a quarter of an hour. But rain is rare; on twenty-nine days out of thirty you can reckon on enough sunshine to photograph any good subject like an Arish woman, that is, a woman from the Eastern Desert, in trousers and fine bracelets, and the odds are, with her face uncovered. Very pretty they are sometimes, with lithe, majestic figures.

Soon you pass into the cheaper belt of shops, where they sell toys, buttons and ribbons, shoddy hosiery, umbrellas and spectacles, mingled with small drug stores and the abodes of slop-tailors; in the midst of all which is the entrance to Hatoun's—one of the principal shops in Cairo where Europeans buy native wares. There are stalls impeding the traffic all the way, in case you want to buy sticky sweets, or small cucumbers, or cheap china. Finally, when you have passed the *rond-pont* where cabs and donkey-boys wait to be fetched from the bazar, you strike a belt of very cheap shops which seem to do most of their trade in shoes hung on strings across their fronts, and pocket handkerchiefs violently coloured, while near the entrance of the bazar you see native cottons and silks hung up to attract tourists.

It is the life, not the shops, at which the tourist looks in the Musky. The Arabs are a nomad race—they migrate in droves about cities as they do in little tribes about the desert. There are such swarms of them passing up and down the Musky that carriages can hardly get along. Not only will the tourist see multitudes of men carrying the implements of their trade or going to their café, but numbers of women with considerable variation in costume. The Cairo woman of the lower class may forget her veil, but she never forgets her anklets, which are made of silver and often very heavy. Perhaps she never takes them off; it is certain that she often wears them inside her stockings with a disastrous effect. The principal variety of her costume lies in the veil, for she is fairly certain to be dressed in black of some kind, cotton or crêpe or satin, according to her condition. The Egyptian woman's veil is a sort of banner of black stuff, three feet long by nine inches wide, suspended from a little gilt cylinder with three rings round it, which hangs from the forehead to the point of the nose, and is said to be intended to keep the veil away from the nose and make an air-funnel for the mouth.

The Turkish-Egyptian woman has no nose-pipe and wears a white veil, which becomes more and more transparent as she becomes more and more emancipated. You see

plenty in veils so transparent that they only differ from those of foreigners by the fact that they leave the eyes uncovered. This veil is a legal fiction: the rich Egyptian-Turkish ladies go so far as to wear one of these ridiculous veils with a foreign hat when they are going on board the steamer at Alexandria to proceed to Europe. The veil is of course discarded the moment they are out of sight of Egypt, and never resumed till they return.

The most interesting veils are those of the country women, especially the *bedawins* who take the trouble to veil, for they hang all sorts of mysterious things round their veils. Sometimes they incline to ropes of big gold and coral beads, sometimes to festoons of gold coins, sometimes to a row of little chains hung vertically down the face.

In the course of half an hour you plough your way through the migrating Arabs and the street hawkers and donkey-boys to the corner of the Khordagiya. There is no difficulty in knowing when you are there. There are beautiful old mosques on both sides of the street—the gates of the City of the Caliphs—and there is a sort of banner hung across the street, like those which assured King Edward of the continued loyalty of his subjects when he was going to be crowned, only this one merely welcomes the tourist to the entrance of the Khan-el-Khalil and Cohen's shop.

He receives a personal welcome also; for the touts who are the skirmishers of the bazars spring upon his carriage from all sides offering their services as guides.

"Sir, I do not want any money."

"What do you want, then?"

"Well, you can give me anything you like."

And so you enter the bazars.

## CHAPTER V

### The Bazars of Cairo: the most Picturesque in the World

FEW of the brainless rich who go to Cairo for the hotel and club life, and hardly realise that they are in Egypt, fail to visit the bazars. They talk a good deal about the bazars, but they only see one little bit of them, and that so demoralised by foreigners that if it were not for the old-world gateways of the *khan* put up by Ismail Pasha, you might think that you were not in the bazars at Cairo but at a Cairene bazar at the Earl's Court Exhibition. The Khan-el-Khalil is only one corner of the bazars, and the most interesting parts of the bazars to the kodaker and student of native life are right at the other end, near the Bab-es-Zuweyla.

The best way to approach the gloriously Oriental bazars of Cairo is from the Sharia Mohammed Ali. Go by the tramway which passes the Continental Hotel, or drive, to the corner of the Sharia Serugiya, which will be described in the chapter on native streets. You are surrounded by really native shops immediately, and pass mosques, *hammams* (baths), and Dervish *tekkiyas* in swift procession, until the two sides of the street almost meeting overhead warn you that you have reached the Tentmakers' Bazar, through lovely lines of mosques and minarets and old palaces with *meshrebiya'd* oriels. It is always cool and dark and picturesque in the Tentmakers' Bazar, just the right environment for the gay awnings and saddle-cloths and leather work that are made in its tiny shops. One of the great





#### A WOMAN'S BURDEN

The man sitting at his ease, beside her is one of the porters who carry such immense weights      The scene is close to the Eshekiya Gardens.



THE FIGURE ON THE RIGHT AND THE FIGURE NEXT BUT ONE TO HIM ARE LEMONADE-SELLERS ON THE  
ATABA-EL-KHADRA

mediæval mansions, to be described in the chapter on Arab houses, opens out of this bazar ; it is known as the Beit-el-Khalil. There are a good many leather-workers at the beginning of the bazar, who make the gay saddle-bags and pouches and purses that the foreigners love to buy. The tentmakers are the most hopelessly vulgarised of all the denizens of the bazar ; elsewhere I have inveighed against them for prostituting their art by substituting coarse caricatures of the ancient Egyptian tomb paintings for the beautiful texts and arabesques which are on the awnings and tent linings they make for Arabs. They talk incessantly to every foreigner who passes :

"Look here, sir, you want to buy very nice. Come in—no sharge for examine"—and so on.

The Tentmakers' Bazar carries you up to the Bab-es-Zuweyla—one of the old gates of Cairo. Most of the bazars lie just inside it.

There are ten leading bazars at Cairo : the Tentmakers' Bazar, the Silk Bazar, the Cotton Bazar, the Tunisian and Algerian Bazar, the Scentmakers' Bazar, the Silversmiths and Goldsmiths' Bazar, the Sudanese Bazar, the Brass Bazar, the Shoemakers' Bazar ; and the Turkish Bazar or Khan-el-Khalil. But the *Sukkariya*, which means Sugar Bazar, though you do not see a single sugar shop in it, and the *Sharia el-Akkadin*, which succeeds it, constitute practically the bazar of cheap hosiery.

For the kodaker, the Tunis Bazar and the Scentmakers' Bazar and the Silk Bazar are the best. They, at any rate, are as Oriental as the bazars of Tunis. Here the shops are mere cupboards, and the owner squats on his counter and fills the entire front. There are benches for customers running along the outside of the shops like a curbstone covered with carpets. The Tunis Bazar is roofed over like the bazars at Tunis, and is a blaze of colour, with its festoons of red and yellow shoes, gaily striped blankets, white shawls, embroidered saddle-bags and tasselled praying-carpets. The shops themselves are lined with shelves divided into squares. A fine note of colour is struck

by the auctioneers, who walk about with strings of the bright yellow shoes of Tunis hung all over them like necklaces; and the carpet-covered *dikkas* or benches outside the shops have gay Arab figures reposing on them, or sitting up with their hands clasped round their knees.

The Silk Bazar and the Sûk-el-Attarin, or Scentmakers' Bazar are the most truly Oriental of all, and their shops are the smallest and most cupboard-like; their proprietors the most addicted to sitting on the counter and filling up the whole front. *Dikkas* and conversation are the features here; shoes and blankets supply the colour.

Unless the tourist knows something of the value of scent there is friction in the Sûk-el-Attarin, or Perfume Bazar—rather a glorified name for the row of half-empty dark cupboards which constitute it. In Tunis the shops of the scentmakers are the handsomest in the bazars, with their brass, and their glass, and their panelling, their gorgeous phials, and their dandies descended from the nobles of Granada. Here an ordinary shopkeeper sits in his dark recess, with a few dirty bottles of gilt glass on the shelf beside him, and a few cheap and gaudy gilt bottles of a smaller size, and ivory balls with cavities for scent on the floor in front of him. As you pass, the spider pulls the stopper out of one of his scent-bottles and rubs it on your sleeve. "There!" he says. "Smell it. Is it not beautiful? There is no scent like it in the world. What will you have? Otto of roses, jasmine, amber, or banana scent?" As if anybody wanted to smell of eating bananas! He could make a much better scent of orange-peel. The Portogallo made by the monks of Santa Maria Novella from orange-peel is as fine as eau-de-cologne.

The shop looks so humble that the tourist generally says that she will buy some scent, probably jasmine, which is really delicious. "How much?" says the man. "An ounce?" An ounce bottle is a modest-looking affair, so she says, "Yes," and is requested to pay about a sovereign. She refuses. The dragoman says, "You must buy it now, because he has poured it out for you. Each drop costs so much, that

he will lose two or three shillings if you do not take it now." If it is a well-off Englishwoman she weakly consents from a sense of *noblesse oblige*; if it is an American she says, "Yes; I will buy it, but two shillings is plenty for that little lot. Tell him I shall only pay two shillings for it." The shopkeeper blusters, and the dragoman flusters, but he does not say too much, for he has learned that the proverb, "If you scratch a Russian you find a Tartar," applies with special force to Americans who have risen from trade. Perhaps, as a parting shot, she recommends the scentmaker to put each kind of scent up in ounce bottles and label it twenty shillings. I side with the Americans against the scentmakers all along the line. The scentmakers' game, as played in Cairo, is an organised conspiracy. Their bazar is not worth visiting except for what you pass through on the way to it, there is nothing beautifully Oriental about it except the duplicity of its shopkeepers, and nothing beautiful about their shops except the brown stains on scent-bottles that are never washed.

For myself, I enjoyed looking at the scentmakers' shops; the black den, the Arab spider, the dusty shelf with its row of stained bottles from which the dusty gilt was wearing off; the little affected foolery of pulling out the stopper and stroking my sleeve with it formed a quiet bit of the life of the East which gave me a subtle satisfaction. But as the spider generally turns into a blustering swindler, and there are no noticeable Oriental effects for the casual tourist, I have said what I have said.

The beauty of the amber perfume, the scent merchant informs you, is that you can use it for flavouring your coffee. But what civilised being would wish his coffee to taste like the smell of the inside of a four-wheeler? You can buy the amber also in the form of paste for filling little ivory boxes the size of the capsule in which you take phenacetin. These are hung round the neck under the clothes in a way that would be useful if they were febrifuges. It is to be hoped that you will escape without being made to buy anything from this child of the Serpent. The last time I was in the

Scent Bazar I was attracted to an Arab cabinet, a little mahogany box about a foot long, with six little drawers and decorated with ivory and bronze, altogether rather Japanese. I asked the price, knowing that five shillings would be a liberal offer for this battered old affair. "Two guineas," he said, true to his hereditary instincts. At that moment an old woman with a face which evidently had been lovely passed through the bazar singing to the accompaniment of a tambourine "She has been a beautiful woman once," I said to the scentmaker. "Yes, sir," he said, "but she is a wreck now."

I gave a look at his box, and went on to the Silk Bazar, which is always picturesque, with yarn-spinners using the same primitive descending peg-top as the yarn-spinners of Sicily use to this day, an inheritance from the Saracenic lords who left the Isle not much short of a thousand years ago.

Nothing pleased me more in the Silk Bazar than the weavers, who sat with their legs buried under the floor, working the treadles of the tiny looms which produced such beautiful results. Here they make the women's veils; here they have their silks put up in quires on book-shelves as they do in Japan. There is so little difference between the shops in an Arab bazar and a Japanese street. Both make counters of their floors, and you sit on the *dikka* outside your bazar-shop in Cairo as you sit on the edge of the floor of the Japanese shop. Both are raised about a foot from the ground.

In the same bazar they sell the Arab soap that is made in spheres like tennis balls, and is said to have merits which certainly do not advertise themselves on the babies' skins.

The Sudanese Bazar is on the other side of the Sukkariya. It is not worth going into for its wares, but it has some picturesque houses, and it leads up to the great mosque of El-Azhar, the University of the Moslem world.

The Sudanese, if they are Sudanese, though I have never seen any there, sell little but mangy leopard skins and the cheap painted boxes which you see in any Arab or

Turkish town, with a few Tunisian drums, tambourines, and gourds.

But there was a worker in the inlaying of mother-of-pearl here whom it was interesting to watch. I did not see him cutting his disks of pearl, but I imagined that he did it with a fret-saw. The dark wood-work of Cairo inlaid in this manner is very effective.

I will not describe the effect of the great mosque here. I will leave that to its own chapter, but the book market beyond was worth a visit, though its merchants were so fanatical. Once I saw a Koran there whose cover attracted me. It was not antique, but it was very Oriental. I told Ali, my interpreter, to ask how much it was. The shop-keeper flatly refused to sell it to a Christian.

Not far from here is the back entrance to the Turkish Bazar, passing the great modern mosque of Hoseyn, to which no one but a Mussulman is supposed to gain admittance. It is fortunately not worth seeing, being quite modern, with Tottenham Court Road carpets, and "nothing to it" but an uncorroborated assertion that it holds the skull of Hoseyn, son of Ali, nephew and heir of the Prophet. The Turkish Bazar is described in this chapter; it is the most vulgarised and Europeanised of all.

But into the Silk and Scentmakers' Bazar I often went. I liked those little dark cupboards, six feet high and six deep and four feet wide, with the owners filling up their fronts like idols in niches. The way the narrow lanes were boarded over from the sky had something delightfully Oriental about it. I liked the large brown bottles criss-crossed with gold in which the scent-sellers kept their perfumes; I liked the rows of foolish otto-of-roses bottles, cut and gilt, but with hardly more inside than a clinical thermometer. Unsophisticated Arabs used to come to these bazars with things to sell in camel-bags and donkey-bags, and all the time the proprietors squatted on their counters, with their legs crossed underneath them, smoking cigarettes and never seeming to be doing anything, whether they were pretending to be awake or frankly asleep.

There were odd little restaurants in these bazars, with two or three of the grand brass jugs, holding three or four gallons each, which they use for hot water. These form a sort of sign-manual of the bazar restaurant, and are about all you see, except richly worked brass urn-stands. From time to time their servants hurried past, carrying coffee in glasses with enamelled knobs to some merchant who was doing a deal with foreigners, and the sun filtered through the boards above. This part of the bazars was always Oriental, always full of subjects for the kodaker whose lenses were strong enough to take things in the shade.

To go into the bazars at Cairo is as good as going to Japan. They are topsy-turvy land ; they are a paradise for kodakers ; they are as exciting to a woman as the summer sales. The whole district between the Citadel and the dried-up canal is called loosely the Bazars. This is the chief commercial part of the Arab city ; here are the best mosques and baths and the most unspoiled old houses and streets. This is the best place for seeing the natives at their trades and for picking up bargains, and it is excellent for seeing native life.

The travellers who divide their time between expensive hotels and the Khedivial Sporting Club, and only go to the bazars to buy the stereotyped curiosities, see little beyond the Turkish Bazar and the Scentmakers' Bazar. These pay the dragoman best ; but they are among the least interesting, for the scentmakers have nothing to show, and the others are too cosmopolitan in their shops and their ways and their wares.

You feel the glamour of the Orient when you only drive down the Musky to the Turkish Bazar, in charge of the hotel dragoman. There is nothing really Turkish about it. Hardly any of the shopkeepers are Turks and hardly any customers are Turks, and not many of the wares are Turkish. But from the time that you enter the Musky you are impeded by a crowd of Orientals so thick that your carriage can hardly plough through them—blue-gowned porters carrying prodigious burdens, and black-robed women



who muzzle their faces, and make a most unconcerned display of ancles in silver fetters. And though the shops are only Oriental in their customers there is a general glow of colour, and a braying of Eastern voices.

When you turn into the Khordagiya just before you enter the bazar, the scene is truly Oriental. There is a fine old mosque at the corner which overhangs the street, and the street itself is lined with the show-cases of the native goldsmiths, who are working in the narrow lanes of their bazar.

These cases are full of the flimsy and barbaric workmanship which the natives love—made of very pure metal—bracelets and anclets of great weight and solidity, these being forms of investment; and rings and earrings and charms—natives love to wear charms

Except the rings, there is little to attract a European in these cases. But the black-robed ladies find them irresistible, and spend hours in the Jewellers' Bazar, where the paths are hardly a yard wide. Europeans generally lose as little time as possible in pressing past the Shoemakers' Bazar into the Turkish Bazar, which is quite demoralised in appearance; its open stalls would look more in place at Earl's Court, and their Levantine owners have many of them visited Earl's Court.

But it is to these stalls and the shops behind them that the dragoman conducts the tourist. For there are plenty of baits to unloose her purse-strings; lace and embroideries, rough turquoises, peridots, opals, brass- and silver-ware; neat little silver-gilt parodies of jewels from the graves of the Pharaohs; various articles supposed to have come from the graves themselves; Persian pottery and enamels and lacquer; carpets, and articles less likely to be immediately useful, like old Korans and Crusaders' armour.

The dragoman prefers large shops like Andalaft's or Cohen's to stalls—they are less inconveniently public; the tourist has less chance of escaping without making a purchase. But the tourist, unless her ideas are too high and mighty, prefers stalls. She does not know what she wants till she sees it; and it is better fun to pick out things with her own

eyes than to look at what the shopkeeper thinks she might be induced to buy. Furthermore, the good shops have an etiquette of fixed prices, round which they have been known to wriggle when the tourist is going away without purchases ; while the stalls expect to do the bargaining for which the Orient is distinguished. The dragoman reminds them that in a shop they can take tea and coffee and Turkish delight all the time they are shopping.

To me it was always discouraging to see a shopman giving ladies relays of almond-stuffed, rose-scented Turkish delight at three shillings a box, and relays of caravan tea—coffee does not count. In a business conducted upon such principles percentages must rule high.

I shall not describe here the rarities and bargains to be looked for in the shops of the Turkish Bazar. This is a chapter of impressions, and the impression I got of the Turkish Bazar was one of a few shops and spiders' dens with good things in them, and a long row of stalls where they sell trinkets and more or less precious stones, terminating in a cross-alley where elegant brass objects are sold at much above their proper price. Beyond this are a number of Persians selling amber necklaces and pipe-mouthpieces and Persian lacquer-boxes. Their prices are fixed at double what they ought to be, for Europeans.

The Turkish Bazar has only a veneer of the Orient ; its Turks are Jews, and other Levantines, in black frock-coats and *tarbûshes*. But it is a good exhibition. As you pass along it, with its saucers of glittering gems, its lumps of turquoise, its Oriental and tourist's-Oriental jewellery, its festoons of lace and embroidery, its flashing and densely chased brass- and silver-ware, and its gaudy keepsakes of Crusaders and Pharaohs—everything seems so theatrical that you expect the young guardsman who is being bored by a bargaining American millionairess to turn into Mr. Haydn Coffin and sing "Queen of my Heart," and keep looking for Mr. Edmund Payne. There is a bit of the real Orient in the middle of it all—a beautiful gateway from a palace of Ismail Pasha.

When the typical tourist has spent all the money she means to spend in the Turkish Bazar, the dragoman takes her on to the Scentmakers' Bazar. This, if he would only let them know it, is in a true Eastern bazar, where things have hardly altered since the time of the Crusades, and the shop-keeper sits in the cupboard where he keeps his goods and takes up nearly all the room, and if he wants to do any work, such as weaving, has a hole in the floor to accommodate his legs

But your dragoman cares for none of these things ; he does not think Arab life worth a glance ; he wants the children (he regards all tourists as children) to spend their money as quickly as possible and get back to the hotel. He does not take them to the bazars for fun ; he takes them to earn commissions on what they spend, as well as his six-shilling fee. There are exceptions, of course, but only to the extent of throwing in a mosque or two.

One of his happy hunting-grounds is the Tentmakers' Bazar, which might have been designed for tourists. Its shops, in a sort of arcade which has a College behind it, are larger and opener, and there is enough colour here for the whole of Cairo. Most of its shops have their owners hard at work embroidering till a victim passes ; the floors are covered with embroidery in the making, the walls with canvases appliqued with texts from the Koran and caricatures of the tomb-paintings of the Pharaohs. If you want colour you buy texts ; red, white, and blue blended are the quietest tints used for texts ; they may have yellow added, and a violent violet and a gaseous green are also very popular. The colours of some of the new texts intended for purchase by tourists are crude enough for a factory-girl's summer hat. But the faded texts which have done duty for mosque or marriage for many years are exquisite. Their colouring was probably flowerlike in its beauty when they were fresh ; they have faded into tints like nature's own.

The parodies of the pictures of the Pharaohs are soberer in their colouring ; the black of hair and the Venetian red of naked bodies play such a large part in these compositions.

They are odiously vulgar, because their faces and attitudes are caricatured to make the tourist like them as much as Mr. Lance Thackeray's satirical postcards of Germans on donkeys and spinsters on camels. They are always in shocking taste and bear hardly any resemblance to their originals. The tourists buy them as greedily as they buy the smoked sky-blue and scarlet statuettes of European exhibitions.

The attractions of the Tentmakers' Bazar for the Philistine of Philistia do not end here. When they are tired of bargaining for tent-linings and are no longer to be attracted by the broiderer's blandishments of "No charge for lookin'," there are saddlers to be encountered, not like the irresistible saddlers of the *silk* at Tunis, whose sabre-taches, and school children's satchels, and purses and mirror-bags are so fascinating that you buy them for all your relations and end by keeping them all for yourself, or the barbaric leather-workers of Omdurman. The saddlers of Cairo are saddlers who devote themselves to the production of donkey-saddles of red brocade and camel-trappings adorned with cowries and little bits of looking-glass. There is not much that any reasonable Philistine can buy from them except embroidered canvas saddle-bags, which make good antimacassars for suburban homes; the little leather cases, which look as if they contained opera glasses but really hold passages from the Koran, which are considered good for binding on the arm when you have a headache; Greek purses, or a stray paper case which costs you about two shillings, and looks as if it had cost twenty, and makes a delightful blotter with its quaint arabesquings.

This is all of the bazars which the dragoman allows the tame tourist to see; and even that goes a long way, because you cannot pass from the Turkish Bazar to the scentmakers' and tentmakers' without passing some of the unspoiled bazars like the silkmakers', and you are surrounded by picturesque native life.

But that is not the way in which I love to do the bazars. I generally approach them from the other side, going down

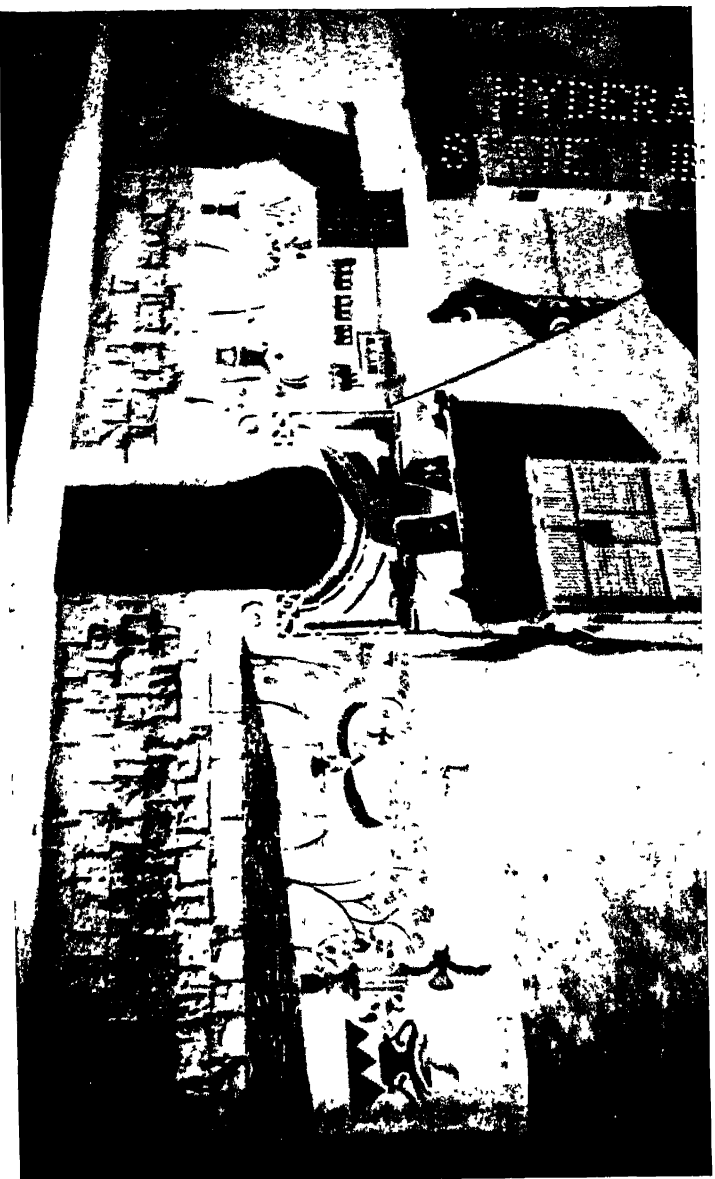
the broad Sharia Mohammed Ali till I come to the Sharia Serugiya a little below the Kesun mosque. This is an unspoiled native street, natural enough for Japan. Its shops are not old buildings, but they are low and the street is broad, so you have good opportunities for kodaking. The shops are quite uninteresting ; they cater for humble native wants. But if there is nothing for the European to buy in the shops there is plenty for him to photograph among the shoppers, and the street is rich in picturesque small mosques, and *sawiyas*, *tekkayas* or colleges of Dervishes, ancient baths, vistas of old rows of dwellings, and a stranded city gate. The Serugiya changes into the Sharia el-Magharbalin, and the Sharia el-Magharbalin changes into the Sharia Kasabet Radowan, which admits to the Tentmakers' Bazar. Only the name is changed. As you draw near the bazar, the street makes lovely lines of little old mosques with Mameluke domes and ancient dwelling-houses with arabesqued façades.

Here you enter one of the great old palaces of Cairo, the Beit-el-Khalil. You can see how vast it was, though there is little left now except the great gateway and the *mak'ad*, the hall with an open front, whose majestic arches rise as high as the roof. Here the beauty of these old streets culminates in an unbroken succession of mosques and minarets and old palaces, with *meshrebiya* oriels, which nearly meet across the road.

We must not linger here ; we must hurry through the Tentmakers' Bazar, which is always cool and dark and picturesque, just the right environment for the gay awnings and saddle-cloths and leatherwork that are made in its shops, though the enjoyment of it is spoiled by the incessant "No sharge to look," "Sir, you want to buy—very nice," "Look here, sir," "Come in," and so on. It ends between two perishing mosques, sentimentally beautiful in their decay, at the Bab-es-Zuweyla, the old city gate, the heart of that Cairo of which I have written that it is still an Arab city of the Middle Ages.

And here at the Bab-es-Zuweyla you will do well to re-

mind yourself that the bazars afford not merely infinitely picturesque specimens of Oriental shops and shopkeepers ; they constitute the most characteristic part of the native city, where you must go to look for your glimpses of the poor living in the atmosphere and with the methods and customs of the City of the " Arabian Nights."



A PILGRIM'S HOUSE, WITH THE SUPPOSED ADVENTURES OF HIS PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA PAINTED ON ITS EXTERIOR.



A STREET SCENE IN THE SERUGIYA.

The figure looking like an old woman is a Bedawin Sheikh. The three other men are in the blue gown called a *galabeah*, and the white turban folded round a crimson *tarbûsh*, which is the ordinary costume of the poor Cairo Arab.



## CHAPTER VI

### Our Dragoman

THE first time I ever visited the bazars of Cairo we were in the Tentmakers' Sûk with the Major, who was buying a pair of Arab slippers. The Major is a very big man and takes a very large shoe. The shoemaker drew attention to his infirmity and wished to charge him double for it. Suddenly an unfamiliar and guttural voice said, as we thought, "These very large shoes made for the Irish." As the Major was an Irishman, the remark seemed appropriate; but we knew afterwards that Ali meant the Arish—or *Bedawin* of the Eastern Desert, who enliven the streets of Cairo.

The voice belonged to a tall, strange Arab, with a face like the hawk-headed Horus. He was dressed in a neat turban and a fine blue cloth *galabeah*, but no socks, only very pointed scarlet shoes. This was Ali.

As he made the cobbler charge the Major a single fare for his shoes, we allowed him to accompany us. He said that he wanted no money. But I knew that it was only Arab duplicity to represent that the pleasure of our company was sufficient reward for the morning's work, so I said that I would give him a shilling at the end of the morning, and that if this was not satisfactory to him, it would be more satisfactory to us for him to leave us at once. He said: "I come; money no matter." He may have expected money off commissions, or he may have had nothing particular to do, and been interested in our caravan, which included two well-dressed women. Arabs are very susceptible to feminine smartness.

He proved to know a good deal of English and possessed the valuable quality of saying, when he was asked a question which puzzled him: "I not know; I ask somebody." This meant that he would ask everybody round us till he elicited the information we required, which was generally the name of some ancient and adorable building that had escaped the mesh of the guide-books.

When we parted, Ali took his shilling with an air of politeness and content, and said that he was always to be found between the Bab-es-Zuweyla and the Tentmakers' Bazar.

We saw nothing more of him till we returned many weeks later from our trip to Khartûm.

Then, one day as we were issuing from the Tentmakers' Bazar, a voice saluted us: "Hallo; I not seen you lately."

"No; we have been away in the Sudan"

"Well, olright; I come with you now."

We did not need him, but he told us the story of the giant, seven or six metres high, who had hung the clubs half-way up the towers of the Bab-es-Zuweyla with such an air of conviction that we thought it would be our loss if we did not engage him to babble to us at the same modest fee of a shilling for the morning. After that he always accompanied us when we passed the Bab-es-Zuweyla, and we used to take that route to the bazars on purpose. It did not cost us anything, for he saved more than his own fee in preventing us from being overcharged by others. He forfeited his commissions at shops by the resolute way in which he beat down prices for us. If the shopkeeper refused to be equitable, he said: "Come away; that man no good," or, "I know cheaper place." When I insisted on paying the man's price, because I wanted that particular thing, I used to say: "Now, Ali, go back to that shop afterwards and make him give you commission for taking us there," and he used to answer, "If you not mind, I try."

He was the most honest Arab I ever struck: he never once tried to get the better of us, and he had another useful quality. He was, as I have said, a big, strong man, and he

was very courageous. More than once when my ardour in sight-seeing had carried me to places in the Arab city where it was not really safe for English people to go, and the Arab hooligans began to hustle, they found they had a lion to deal with in Ali. One could go anywhere with him.

One day I could not find him. Next day he told me that he had been in prison, waiting to be tried. He had had to fight a man while he was out with a foreign gentleman. "This morning tried," he said. "The man have to go to prison for two months. I have to pay a hundred piastres for constructing a disturbance." I offered to pay his fine, but he said, "English gentleman I with paid it." When I told the Commissioner of Police about this afterwards, he made a note of it in Ali's favour, though Ali had to go to prison for it. It is the Commissioner of Police who issues dragomans' licences.

Ali was delightfully devout and sentimental. Sometimes when we went into a mosque—the mosque of the Sultan Shab'an for one—he said: "This very holy person's place; I say my prayers here." Once as we were coming back from the Tombs of the Caliphs he stopped beside a little enclosure of graves and wept. "All I have in the world here," he said simply. "I all alone now."

Sometimes when I asked him for a place like the Mosque of Abu-Bekr, which is not near any other, he said: "I think no such place; but you know." I told him the directions they had given me for finding this mosque at the Wakfs (where they had recommended me not to miss it), and it was marked in a vague way on one of the maps, printed right across a nest of small streets. I took my bearings as well as I could and steered for it. Ali asked every one we met, but nobody knew it by that name, though gradually Ali began to receive hints that there was a very old and beautiful mosque in the district, and this mosque we eventually ran to earth. Then we discovered that it had a name about a yard long, with the words *Abu-Bekr* coming in the middle! Europeans had not selected the significant words—that was all.

Ali was delighted. After this he would never give up looking for a building I asked for.

He always accompanied me in my street-to-street visitations of the Arab city. I did my best to visit every old street in Cairo. I used to stalk down the middle of the street, note-book in hand, with my camera slung round my waist. Ali carried my stick, which gave him great pleasure, as dragomans do not bring their own sticks when they are engaged : they must have their hands free for carrying things. I went into every mosque that was open, and wherever I saw a house that looked old I sent Ali into its court to see if it had any old architecture, and if there was anything to prevent me going in. I was seldom refused : the permission was generally given cordially. The Cairenes are naturally obliging and polite : they know that it is quite safe to leave their houses open under the British rule ; and they have few Mohammedan prejudices, except the artificially fostered idea, which the Mohammedans of Asia do not share—that it is wrong to live in any country not ruled by Mohammedans. Ali used to dart out again like a rabbit, and say "Come on" ; and somebody would smile a permission as I entered, or very often the courtyard was left to take care of itself. The façades of the house round the courtyard are generally its oldest and best preserved parts. We were often invited to look at the *selamlık* and the *mak'ad*, the hall with the open front, and once in a while, if the master of the house were in, he would send his women out of the way and show us any fine rooms there were in his harem.

Ali took me into various interesting old baths, which may form the subject of a chapter ; various *khans* once the caravanserais of merchants, now used as warehouses ; various schools, some of them in beautiful mediæval buildings ; oil mills and mosques.

The oil mills were very curious. They were almost invariably in very old buildings with arched chambers ; and the mills were driven, like *sakiyas*, by oxen walking round and round. The oil was made from cotton-seed, and the presses used were something like the old wooden presses of

the seventeenth century, still used in out-of-the-way parts of Italy for making wine.

Many small mosques are always kept shut, and even the persistent Ali, who questioned every one in the street, could not always discover where the key was kept. And they did not always have overshoes to go over your boots, which implied taking off your boots. And they were not invariably interesting when you had succeeded, with much loss of time, in getting them open. But there is generally something ancient or beautiful in every mosque-interior in Cairo; and the smaller mosques sometimes do not follow the accepted pattern, but break out in their own way, like that mosque of Abu-Bekr. They are apt to have very beautiful *meshrebiya* work, and sometimes you come across a fine old pulpit or a delightful courtyard.

We used to have the same fun at most of them over our mosque-tickets. Admission to mosques for ordinary Christians is by little brown tickets, which you buy at Cook's or any of the large hotels for fivepence—two piastres each. But as an author with proper introductions and writing a book about Egypt, I had received from the head of the Wakfs, who look after the Mohammedan monuments, a printed letter admitting me to all their mosques and monuments free, with permission to photograph or sketch. The difficulty was that, even at quite large mosques, the attendants at the gate could seldom read; so we had to wait while some one who could read, and whom the attendants could trust, was found. They did not like foregoing the little brown tickets, which meant fivepences for the mosque treasury. So badly educated were the attendants that I had been going to all sorts of mosques—including El-Azhar itself—for two or three months before it was discovered that the clerk who filled in my pass had dated it from November 1907 to May 1907, which, of course, made it invalid from the first of December.

Ali was very useful over this question of tickets. He always told the incredulous attendants a long list of mosques, from El-Azhar downwards, where the pass had been accepted, and forced them to send for some one who could read.

When we left the mosque Ali caused them fresh annoyance by informing us that the regulation fee for the use of overshoes was a small piastre—a penny farthing a pair. Inexperienced Americans are often deceived into giving a shilling. I much preferred to give the proper fee for the shoes, and to give the shilling to the attendant who had shown us round, if he had been intelligent and obliging. But if he had been sulky and hostile, as is sometimes the case, I gave him nothing. As a class, mosque attendants are the surliest Arabs you meet, which may be due to fanaticism.

I think that Ali enjoyed himself most when I was shopping. He admired my experienced bargaining. One learns a thing or two in the course of twenty years of curio-hunting in the East and South. When a shopkeeper with whom one had not dealt before asked an outrageous price for anything, Ali would say, "Not a tourist, this my gentleman"; and explain that I was too old a bird to be caught with chaff; also that I did not waste time with men who would not proceed to business at once, but always went to another shop. This generally did away with the preliminary stages of the bargain. If the man was incredulous, we went on. If it was a second-hand thing—say an old piece of brass, or Persian embroidery, or jewellery—I used to tell Ali the price he could offer for it as we passed. While he was making the offer—even that takes many words in the Orient—I wandered on, looking for fresh treasure-troves.

Sometimes as a variant I held up a piece of money and pointed to a thing as I passed. It was in this way that I bought some of my Persian embroideries, and the beautiful Persian bowl that always stands on our sideboard filled with lemons, because we like the contrast of the pale lemon and the deep-gold brass.

It is an antique brass bowl, the size of an ordinary pipkin, richly stamped and chased with Persian hunting scenes, and used to stand in the back part of the shop kept by an old Turk from Assuan, who, contrary to the habit of Turks, loved to bargain over his goods. He lived at the end of the Tentmakers' Bazar, and always brought out chairs into the

street for us when we commenced looking at things in his window, which had no glass. He kept his change and his spectacles and his snuff-box in that bowl, so my attention was constantly drawn to it. One day as I passed I held up an Egyptian two-shilling piece and pointed to that bowl. He had evidently bought it cheap, so he emptied out its contents with grave politeness and handed it to me. He saw by my eye that I was not going to buy any rings or daggers or Ethiopian necklaces that day. These were his specialities.

So the bowl was handed to Ali, and we pursued our march through the bazars. When we got to the Turkish Bazar, where the brass-shops are, all the shopkeepers asked Ali how much I had given for it; he told them this, but he would not tell them where I had bought it, lest he should spoil my future bargaining with the old Turk. They at once began to bid for it, and one man offered me as high as ten shillings for the bowl I had just bought for two.

Another time I bought from the old female fiend in the brass market, the brass milk-dipper which is now in my Moorish room—an embossed and very solid sort of pint-pot, with an upright handle about eighteen inches long. We were walking about the old Arab streets for a couple of hours after this. Every restaurant keeper we passed asked Ali how much I had given for this, and when he learned that I had only paid fifteen piastres offered me an advance. One man had a thing I wanted more, but only worth about half as much—an old solid brass coffee-saucepan of rather an elegant shape. I offered to exchange. He wanted me to give him twenty-five piastres as well as my milk-dipper. I knew better, and the next day bought just such a saucepan in the Market of the Afternoon for a shilling. Next time we passed the crafty restaurateur he offered to make the exchange for nothing. Ali was magnificent. "Your saucepan was only worth a shilling. My gentleman bought one like it, only better, for a shilling." The restaurateur grew very heated over the bargain he had missed, and told Ali never to enter his shop again. The pugnacious Ali made some withering retort about the class of his business.

Ali was very useful at the Market of the Afternoon. He could tell me about the games people were playing. But he preferred the Brass-market second-hand stalls. We never passed them without stopping for a few minutes. He was amused at the tantrums of the fat old Moslem who kept the chief stall—a great character. She was old, awful, and closely veiled, and sat in a recumbent position, stretching out towards the customers her solid but shapely bare ancles in a pair of very heavy gold anklets. They may have been gilt brass, but they were at any rate very handsome. Her bracelets, of which she wore many, were certainly gilt brass. What you noticed most were the extraordinary, expressive eyes between her face-veil and head-veil. She was generally smoking, almost always contemptuous, and flew into fierce passions on small provocations. Sometimes she did not want to have anything to do with a dog of a Christian who dared to dispute the extravagant prices she would put on. She would yell at me and almost throw things at me if I attempted to bargain with her. At other times she would let me put my own prices on anything in the extensive stock she spread on the ground. And she had covetable things—such as a fine assortment of the elegant brass ewers called *ibreek*, which the Arabs use for pouring water over the hands with the *tisht*—the quaint basins and water-strainers which go with them—fine old brass coffee-pots, coffee-saucepans, coffee-trays, coffee-cups, coffee-mills, fine brass-work for the Narghileh pipe, chased brass lantern-ends, brass open-work toilet-boxes, incense-burners, inkpots, scales, tall candlesticks for standing on the ground—all of good old patterns and workmanship. It was from her that I bought my delightful little chased brass box pierced like the *plâtre ajouré* of mosque windows. On these occasions she would smile and jest quite flirtatiously behind her rigorous face-veil. You could see it by her eyes, which were generally so furious. This did not seem to please Ali so much as when she was playing the spit-fire. I could hardly get him away then.

He had a friend at the next stall—a poor old man with a humble stock that was often quite interesting, for besides brass



ware he sold second-hand the jewellery worn by the poor Arabs and Sudanese, brass and copper and glass bangles, base-metal anklets of various patterns, well-worn rings, sometimes exceedingly interesting and sometimes highly elegant, Moham-medan and Jewish charms and lucky-bags, and various clasps, and so on, but not many brooches or necklaces. Ali told me what to give him for any article that took my fancy, and it was always impossibly cheap. His prices were far below the old woman's. For though she sat on the ground under a temporary awning, and her goods were spread out on the ground, she regarded herself as a shop-keeper, not a stall-keeper, because she was always there. Higher up, in front of the beautiful five-arched arcade of the Beit-el-Kadi itself, the stalls degenerated into selling bottles and bits of old metal.

One thing I never succeeded in doing—visiting a Moham-medan festival with Ali. He was going to take me to the Ashura, to the Molid-en-Nebi, to the return of the Holy Carpet, and I don't know what else. But when the day came he did not come—I suppose he had a prejudice against going with a Christian, and was too polite to say so.

## CHAPTER VII

### How to Shop in Cairo

TWO friends may assure you with equal truthfulness that Cairo is a good or a bad place for shopping in. Either is true according to your object in shopping. Of one quality or another you may buy almost anything in Cairo. And if it is an article you can buy from a Levantine's shop it will not be very dear, but if it is something that you can only find at the special shops kept by Europeans, who come to Cairo to make a fortune quickly, it may be very costly. There are, for instance, what the regular shopkeepers scornfully call "butterfly shops"—i.e. the shops in the neighbourhood of the Savoy Hotel, which are open only in the season and are kept by dressmakers, milliners, and what not from Paris. They are like the Riviera shops—they often have lovely things in the very latest fashions, but their prices are naturally enormous. In this chapter I shall not deal with necessities. One can buy any necessary in Cairo. I shall confine myself to the kind of things that people take back for their collections, or as mementoes of Egypt—such as gems, curios, silver-ware, embroideries, photographs and postcards.

I will not pretend to say which is the best of the curio shops that cater for the very wealthy. A shop where the plausible young man talks in pounds instead of piastres is no place for me. Such shops often ask more pounds than I would pay piastres for some little bit from the tombs of Der-el-Bahari. They have lovely objects in their windows, objects that would be a grace even if they were not a prize to a

museum There are a couple of them opposite the Savoy, and another kept by a superior American opposite Shephard's, which has for its chief *objet* one of the glorious old mosque lamps of enamelled glass made towards the end of the Middle Ages, the collection of which is the pride of the Arab Museum at Cairo. He asked £1,200 for this: what he would take did not transpire. It is to shops such as these that one would go for the jewellery worn by princesses in the days of the Pharaohs, which is so curiously modern in its effects. For example, one might take a gold bangle with its circle as stiff and true as if it had been made yesterday with a band of enamels in various colours running round it—all unchipped—and half a dozen little enamelled discs hanging from it by fine chains an inch and a half long. This looks just as modern and perfect as the copies sold for about £20 a piece in the Musky or in the shops kept by Orientals on the front near the Continental Hotel. The imitation (in eighteen-carat gold, mark you) is so like the original, if original it be, that it is much safer to buy the imitation.

The extremely modern appearance of so many Egyptian ornaments, whether jewels or scarabs, constitutes one of the great difficulties in the way of buying them. It is almost impossible for any one but an expert to detect an imitation if it is made in genuine materials. The makers of imitations are wise enough to imitate the ancient goldsmiths' work in fine gold, and to employ the best workmen to execute it. The intrinsic value of the imitations is often very considerable. The forger risks this amount of capital on the chance of bringing off a coup. Two copies made by the same forger, if he has no shop of his own with plate-glass windows in the right quarter, but works to the order of wealthy shopkeepers, may one of them be sold as modern jewellery in the antique style for £20, and the other for £200 as having come from the wrist of the mummy of Queen Nefertari or Princess Bint-Anat. Such is life; and such is luck.

The leading curio-shopkeepers, however, give guarantees of

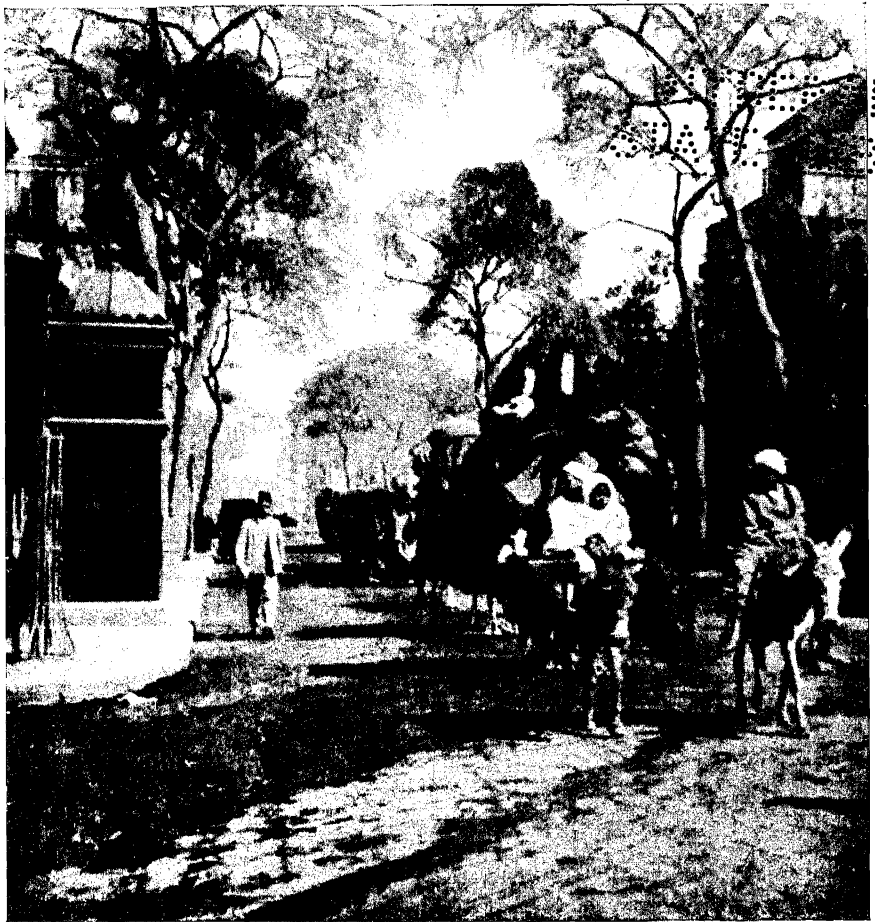
the genuineness of their goods, and if an article were proved to be a forgery would at once refund the money rather than destroy the reputation of a well-founded business. There is always a risk in buying an expensive piece from a man who might not be found if you had come down on him for his guarantee; you have to take as much care in the choice of a man to buy valuable antiques from as you have in the choice of a trustee.

At the same time, you have far more chance of buying a bargain from a stray individual than from a large dealer: the former may not know the value of what he is selling. The dealer would be sure to know. Twenty pounds down to such a man might mean more than the chance of eventually getting £2,000 if he kept his prize for several years. And he is hampered by the unwillingness of people to buy an expensive article without the guarantee of a well-known dealer. I am speaking of a purchaser who has not sufficient expert knowledge to be able to appraise the genuineness and value of the article for himself. If he is an expert he will be on the look-out for the opportunities of buying from unlikely people. As I have often pointed out, there are two golden rules in curio-buying: (1) If you know when a thing is genuine and know its real value, buy it at the wrong shop; (2) If you don't know the value of a thing only pay what you think it worth as an ornament to your house or your person; don't give one penny for any special value that may be supposed to attach to it.

By buying it at the wrong shop I mean buying it from some one who does not know the value of its materials or workmanship. A rag-dealer has no respect for mediæval fabrics or embroideries.

For curio-buying at moderate prices you will have to depend on the bazars and the markets, and I will tell you how to do your bargaining when the time comes.

If you are not expert, it is best to buy your mummies, your mummy-cases, superb with gilt and hieroglyphic paintings, your wooden models of soldiers and workers in the field, your little clay soul-houses, your alabaster canopic jars, as well as



A BEDAWIN TRIBE ON THE MARCH THROUGH CAIRO.  
The entire community with all its goods and animals follows behind.



AN AVENUE IN CAIRO.

your ancient Egyptian jewels, from the Museum, if it has what you require in its sale-room, or from the great European curios-shops. Never forget that the Museum has a *salle de vente*, where the prices are much more moderate than they are at shops, and where nothing is sold that is not undoubtedly genuine, found by the excavators in the employ of the Director.

Down in the bazars there are at any rate two great shops whose guarantee can be respected, Andalaft's and Joseph Cohen's. But they do not deal so much in ancient Egyptian jewels and curios as in choice Oriental things of the last two or three centuries, mixed, of course, with showy modern things, sold at a good but not inordinate profit, to tourists too ignorant to appreciate choice pieces. Of Hatoun's, a shop in the Musky which sells the same sort of things and has an enormous stock, I cannot speak from personal knowledge.

To show how necessary it is to take care, I will tell what happened to Belsize at the most swaggering shop in Cairo. He bought a Bokhara carpet which the proprietor guaranteed "perfect" and "absolutely unique." When it had been down a few weeks it showed a big split which had been skilfully repaired, and Belsize went to demand his money back from the proprietor. "No, no, Mr. Belsize; I cannot do that. But I tell you vot I vill do. I have plenty more exactly like it, and you shall have whichever you like."

Joseph Cohen, who has the largest shop in the bazars, has a reputation for fair dealing. He has fixed prices, and the prices he fixes for the brass boxes and bowls inlaid with silver, the spangled Assiut shawls, the harem embroideries, and the cloisonné umbrella-handles, in which the untrained tourist delights, are as moderate as any one's in Cairo. His firm is of international repute, and has large dealings with museums. Fine rugs and carpets rising in value to a thousand pounds are his speciality. But he also has splendid old Persian embroideries and enamels and various Arab antiques of great value from the old Mameluke houses. Cohen's is a good place for the inexpert tourist to go to who means to spend large sums of money on

buying Oriental trophies for his home, because Cohen has fixed prices and believes in the motto of a famous London caterer, "Give your customer good value and he'll come again."

Andalaft has a smaller shop than Cohen. He has only a small stock of tourists' brass and embroideries: he affects enamels, and earthenware, old illuminated Korans, mediæval armour, and beautiful jewellery, chiefly Persian, which last is not very expensive as such things go. Mr. Andalaft is a man of remarkably good taste, indeed fine taste is the characteristic of his shop. The old Persian arm amulets which he has collected—flat, heart-shaped gold and silver boxes set with large turquoises for containing a verse of the Koran, make delightful ornaments. These and other jewels fill the locked cases in the front part of his shop. But it is when he takes you to the back, and commences fingering lovingly old Persian lustre-ware that you see how different he is from the other traders in the noisy Khan-el-Khalil. For he is an enthusiast, and while he shows you his old illuminated Korans, he stops to point out and translate the passages which were borrowed from a Christian saint. You ask if a suit of antique armour is Crusader's armour that has been hoarded in the Sudan. "Alas, no," he says, and tells you the points to look out for in armour that has been in Egypt since St. Louis and all his chivalry surrendered to the Saracens, where the great city of Mansura stands to-day. But his heart is chiefly with the old enamels and lustre of Persia; and his old Persian pictures, and his Persian boxes—painted with the portraits of famous beauties of Ispahan and Shiraz, which glow like the lustres and enamel—and his jade. Mr. Andalaft always strikes one as the artist rather than the trader; and he speaks such good English that he is a valuable aid to a collector. When you have bought all you care about in his own stock, it is worth while asking him to step across to Irani's with you. Irani is a good man, but he speaks no English, and if left to himself opens his mouth very wide to foreigners.

There are plenty of shops in the Khan-el-Khalil which



have fine or charming pieces, suited to pockets of varying depths, especially in the direction of old brass-ware, embroideries and lace, enamels and pottery. The trouble is that without interminable bargaining you will be outrageously swindled. Few of these traders have fixed prices like Andalaft and Cohen, and nearly all of them fix their prices, not according to the value of the article, but according to the value of the purchaser. They gauge how rich or otherwise he is, how shrewd or foolish, how eager or unwilling, and the price moves accordingly. With most of them you have the feeling all the time that you are dealing with a dirty, chuckling Oriental spider.

When you come upon genuine Persians they are not so bad. They are dignified, and often, like the Turk, have fixed prices; but they have one price fixed for the tourist and another for the native, so if you are wise you do not buy from them at all, since they are certain to be asking you far above the value of the article, and will not budge from their price. Amber is the speciality of the Turks; lacquered boxes and turquoises are the specialties of the Persians. You often see fine pieces of amber among the beads and pipe-mouth-pieces; but they are not comparable in beauty with the old amber, which has gone opaque and golden, or clear and sherry-coloured, to be found in the necklaces of odd beads, which descend from generation to generation in the Sudan.

The number of Persians in the bazars seemed to me really extraordinary. Mr. Andalaft told me that it was not hard to explain "Persia," he said, "is a very difficult country to get to for tourists, so the Persians have to look about for a market outside of their own country, where the duties are low, and there is a good Government like the English, that does not allow people to have their money taken away from them, and where many tourists come. Egypt is the *tourist's market* of Persia."

Here was another testimony to the value of the British Occupation.

One of the great bargainings in the bazars at Cairo is

over precious stones, above all, turquoises, though there is a determined effort to make people buy peridots, which are a monopoly taken over from the Khedive, and various cheap stones, such as rose-crystals, chrysoprases, and poor amethysts. A good deal of this trade is in the hands of Persians and what Belsize called "our Indian fellow-subjects."

The Indians are the easier to bargain with; they know the trading of the West as well as the East, and are aware of the value of a quick turnover. But they are by way of having fixed prices. Ladies get over this difficulty if the dealers have named a price far above what it would pay them handsomely to take, by picking out something of sufficient value, and saying that they will buy the first article if they receive the second article as *bakshish*. But this is of no use if you have a dragoman or guide with you to see the trader's weakness and get his *bakshish*. That word *bakshish* is unusually potent in the bazars. It covers the heavy commission demanded by any native who is taking you about, on every article which you purchase. He demands this as his reward for bringing you to the shop. If the merchant does not give it, the guide does all he can to prevent any foreigners, whom he may be accompanying in the future, from going into that shop. Knowing the prejudices of the English, he says that the man who keeps the shop has many imitations among his goods, and that he is a liar. This last is a beautiful trick, for of course the guide himself is a liar. He glories in it. He is telling a lie over this very thing, and he exults in deceiving you.

And now as to the quality of turquoises—the best, the hard, well-polished, deep blue stones, which have no flaw and are of a beautiful, regular shape, you can buy only in the jeweller's shops, of which there are some in the bazar as well as near the big hotels. But there are many fascinating stones of lower grades which the Indians and Persians sell. To begin with, there are large stones not so hard, not quite free from flaws, not so well polished, not of the most esteemed turquoise blue, which are even more beautiful than the best turquoises. They are of a colour which is never sold in

London, a beautiful deep Cambridge blue, quite distinct from the sky-blue of the best turquoises, and the very pale blue of the low-priced turquoises from Australia which the Italians use in making their cheap turquoise jewellery. I know of no more exquisite blue. You will find extremely beautiful effects also among matrix-stones flecked over with black or brown. If you place one alongside of the dull blue matrix-turquoises which are sold in London, you will never want to buy the latter again.

These you can buy from the Indians in the bazar at a very moderate price, if you are a good bargainer; and they are not outrageously dear things to buy if you pay three times the proper price for them. Their fault is that they are apt to go green or pale.

From the Indians also you can buy matrix-turquoises, from the good Persian mines, hard stones, of a beautiful bright blue which does not change its colour, and some of them with very few flaws, and not very dear. These "Persian" matrix-stones are most covetable. Very covetable also are the matrix-stones of a dark bright blue, darker than cornflowers. I do not know where they come from, but, when they are beautiful, they are the dearest of all the matrix-stones to buy from these Indians.

Below them come the common turquoises, mostly set in large brass rings, and some of them quite green, but really rather pretty. They are found in Egyptian territory, and I have bought large ones for as little as sixpence each.

There remain the very soft turquoises, badly cut, badly polished, but without flaws, and often of a beautiful turquoise blue, shaped almost like a beehive, which the Arabs are so fond of wearing in their large silver rings: these are almost as cheap as the last, but they sometimes go green and dull directly, and hardly ever keep their beauty. Buy these rings from the donkey-boys and hawkers you see wearing them. Three shillings each is a good price for them, and the settings are often old and beautifully worked by Sudanese silversmiths. You can easily have another stone set in them.

The first thing to do when you go into a bazar is to saunter through it, and ask the price of everything you like, saying that you don't mean to buy anything until you have seen everything. The Oriental is perfectly agreeable to this: he is polite as well as wily; it is to his interest for his stock to be examined. In the Tentmakers' Bazar the shopkeepers call out: "No sharge for looking," as you pass. The moment when you have said that you are not going to buy anything is rather a good time to buy. They put the prices down very low to tempt you. They don't mind if you do break your word—in this way. Price the same sort of thing at different stalls which are a long way from each other. It helps to give the real price and to show which stall is cheapest. Do not be afraid of giving trouble. Orientals do not mind how much trouble they take for a prospective customer, or how much trouble they give by asking three times what they mean to take. Leave your dragoman behind when you really mean to do your buying. Then they will do extra bargaining to the extent that his commission would come to. The ordinary dragoman expects commissions on all sales when he accompanies the tourist. In bargaining there are certain other conditions to remember besides leaving the dragoman behind. Upon new brooches and trinkets and photograph-frames they will not come down much, because they will have been afraid to put too much profit on an article which has a fairly regular price. But for second-hand lace and turquoises they may ask ten times the proper price, and are pretty certain to ask three times. It is on objects for which they ask, not the value, but whatever they think you will give, that you can beat them down most. They will often come down one half and nearly always one third on such things, if you are firm with them.

But to return to *bakshish*. If no native is with you to demand his commission, and you know that the merchant is making you pay too much, demand a *bakshish*. If the merchant demurs, say: "If I had brought a dragoman with me you would have had to pay him *bakshish*." Thus

adjured, the merchant generally gives in. He does not of course return you a commission in money, but offers you some worthless article among the goods which you have been examining. Say right out: "No; I don't want that—it is not worth anything." Choose a thing of about the value which you consider you ought to get, and you will generally get it. If you do, promise to come back again, and the next time the prices he asks will be more moderate. In dealing with the "fixed-price" Indian, the best plan is first of all to make your choice of all the turquoises or other articles that you require, then to make up your mind as to the price at which you would consider them a sufficiently tempting bargain, and offer it. He will at once attempt to bargain with you. He will tell you that a lady paid him for one piece, the exact counterpart of one of the objects which you have selected, more money than you offer him for all the pieces together. He will pick out this and the other piece and tell you how specially good it is—that the price is going up for this kind of thing, that if you came back in a fortnight's time he could not sell it for the same price as he could take now, etc. Let him talk himself out and use up as many of his arguments as he can before you commence talking again. It weakens him in answering you back. Then say:

"I'm very sorry; but so much (naming the sum you offered him before) is all that these things are worth to me," and get up to go.

If it gives him a moderate profit to take your price, he will take it, saying, "You will come back again. You will recommend me to your friends. But I cannot take the same prices from them. I only take them from you because you are very clever. Nothing escapes you. It is a pleasure to deal with such a person," etc., etc. "You are so different from Americans."

"How?" you ask.

"They are my best customers," he replies, with a beautiful Oriental smile. "But it is no pleasure to serve them, though I take much money out of them, for they do not

know anything. They do not know a fine piece when they see it—they are sure to like the wrong thing, if it is a little—a little grand."

He will, of course, be refering to the common, rich Americans, who flood Egypt. When an American working man becomes suddenly wealthy by a mining discovery or keeping a shop in a mining township, which "strikes it rich," and launches out into travel, Egypt is unfortunately one of the first countries he is likely to honour with a visit, perhaps because it is mentioned in the Bible, the book he knows best. The Americans who go to Egypt are, on account of the expense, generally the best and the worst. As a nation, all over the world, they lack discriminating taste and let shopkeepers decide for them, though, when it comes to prices, their native sagacity declares itself. They want nothing worse than the best, and they mean to pay only "bedrock" prices for it. But these common people have no notion of what is good, or what is the proper price to pay for it.

To return to the Indians in the bazars. If the price you offer them does not pay them at all, they say, "I am very sorry, sir, but it is not possible," and begin to put all the things back. Then get up and go. If it is possible, and they are bluffing, they will call you back. If you have mentioned too low a price, there are two courses open to you. Either to go away and leave the things, which will gain you the respect of the bazar as a man of your word or to say, "Well, what is the lowest price you can do them for? I have told you all I think they are worth to me, and if you increase the price much, of course I cannot buy anything." It may be that only a very small percentage separates you. And you will be wise to pay that. You were not allowing him enough margin. To pay him the little extra for his profit won't spoil your bargain with him next time.

But if you go away you stand to win in two ways. If the man has been bluffing he will call you back, and accept your offer—and if he is not, and you go away without buying anything, you will have impressed him and all the neighbour-



A MARRIAGE PROCESSION, WITH THE HÔTEL CONTINENTAL IN THE BACKGROUND



THE FAMILY OF A PILGRIM RETURNING FROM MECCA  
Notice the elaborate Cashmere shawl spread over the back of the carriage



ing shopkeepers with the idea that you are not a man to bluff against.

I promised to give the recipe for bargaining with the various Levantines who have shops and "bazzars" in the bazars. The Levantine is a tough nut to crack. He relies on wearing down your patience. You have to wear down his. He commences by asking twice or three times what he is willing to take. You offer him what you consider the proper price. He comes down a fraction. If you really covet the article and mean to buy it before you leave the shop, so as not to run any risk of its being gone before you can come again, you go on bargaining inch by inch. Look at a whole lot of other things, but keep up a steady fire of depreciation about this, and go on refusing his gradually diminishing prices for it. If it is only a thing which you want mildly, the odds are that you will get it at your own price in the end. Stick to your own price, and every time you pass the shop ask: "Well, are you going to let me have that—for—piastres?" (naming your original price). One day, seeing that you do not mean to weaken, he will say "Yes," or tell you the real amount at which it will pay him to sell the article. And, as I have said above, paying him a small margin of profit where you have named less than he gave for it, will not lower your credit as a bargainer.

As these people are such sharks, so rapacious and mean, you should avoid a frontal attack on the object you really want to buy. Approach by traverses. Bargain earnestly and eagerly over several things which you do not want; and when he says that they are the best things in the shop, say, "Well, what will you let me have cheap—this, or this, or this?" running through about two dozen things, and ending up with the thing you really want. Then prepare to leave the shop, and he will say you can have the last thing cheap. "What do you call cheap? Do you mean 5 piastres or 50 piastres?" (as the case may be). "Yes; you can have it for that, and won't you have that mummy-case (or whatever it was) too," he asks, mentioning the thing you priced first, for which he asked such a hideous sum. You shake your head and retire, carrying off the

purchase you wanted for something like its proper price. I suppose that if you lived in Cairo and they got to know you, they might understand some day as Italians, who are also great bargainers, get to understand very readily, that you want to know the *ultimo prezzo*—the last price, i.e. the lowest. But running straight is not natural to a Levantine.

The *suk* of the second-hand clothes is a very interesting place to go shopping in, for there, when you are lucky, you pick up for mere songs the lovely old Persian shawls which are hand-worked as close as if they were woven, and the gossamer veils of silk coloured like the rainbow worn by dancing women, and wonderful Arab dresses which have done duty for *bedarwin* sheikhs and will do duty for many fancy-dress balls. Embroideries, too, can be bought here, the patient embroideries of the harem, done before harem doyleys and cushion-covers became a regular line with London drapers. And nearly every day there are auctions, in which the auctioneers carry their goods piled on their shoulders.

You cannot leave Cairo without visiting the Tentmakers' Bazar, which leads from the Bab-es-Zuweyla to one of the most beautiful and ancient streets, the Sharia Kasabet Radowan.

It is here that they make the superb awnings used in the huge pavilions in which the Khedive's Ministers and the great dignitaries of Islam hold receptions at the *Molid* of the Prophet, and on similar occasions. These awnings, like the Satsuma jars and painted umbrellas of Japan, are made by boys. Men and boys sit working at them all day long in a hundred shops. You would think that all Egypt abode in its tents, like the Israelites of the Bible; but immense quantities of them are needed for the pavilions of the *Molid*, and the decorations of a rich Arab's house, and hotels like the Cataract at Assuan, where they know the value of local colour and use hundreds of yards of them.

They are sometimes made of real tentmakers' canvas, sometimes of silk. They are rather dear things to buy, and the tentmakers are so accustomed to tourists that they always ask twice the real value from a foreigner.

Except in large masses, or very high up, the new awnings are often garish and unattractive ; in purchasing them always look out for fine old second-hand pieces. Specially hideous and touristified are the awnings, hangings, portieres, etc., which imitate in coloured cottons the paintings in the Tombs of the Kings - they are coarse, and ill-coloured, and in execrable taste ; they bear no more resemblance to the originals than a music-hall caricature would ; they are hateful, and as you drive or walk down the Tentmakers' Bazar the shopkeepers call out to you incessantly to make you buy them. Much the most effective designs are the texts from the Koran.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Cairo at Night

CAIRO presents curious contrasts at night. Large portions of it are plunged into outer darkness, with every door locked and human beings as scarce as they are in the city of London after business hours, while other streets are as gay as the Yoshiwara quarters in Japan.

The native tradesman closes much earlier than the European; the bazars are closed long before dinner time, and with them most places of business in the native streets except food shops. For the Arab loves to spend his time at cafés and the Arab theatre. The foreign European residents also love to spend their evenings at the Opera, and the English are domesticated here as elsewhere; while the wealthier tourists spend their time in dining out and dances at the hotels.

If you are neither at the Opera nor at a hotel entertainment, there is surprisingly little to do at Cairo in the evening; the one outdoor amusement is to watch the fast life in the streets at the back of the Esbekiya Gardens.

This, at any rate, is very interesting, if not very edifying; in some places like the Haret-el-Roui it is simply appalling. That is the quarter where the lowest houses of ill-fame are situated. The women in them are mostly Jewesses, but there are a certain number of Italians and many Levantines among them. The Jewesses are mountains of flesh; the Arabs admire obesity, but how they tolerate these creatures I cannot understand. For they have cruel, bestial, ill-tempered faces flaming with rouge, and their eyes blaze,

and their huge forms are arrayed in cheap and tawdry finery and sham jewellery. They are everything that is repulsive to an Englishman, and they live in the most horrible little dens, some of which have cage fronts like similar quarters in Japan.

Among the Levantines you see occasionally much more attractive women, wild-eyed, lithe creatures—human leopards, who sit on the ground outside their houses with their straight strong legs, locked in heavy anklets, thrust out of their robes without shoes or stockings.

They all solicit you, and pluck you by your clothes in the most impudent way. Indeed it would be hardly safe to go down these streets after nightfall without a dragoman, for they are full of night-birds seeking whom they may devour. They are the kind of creatures you see in the cafés chantants, to which you are taken to witness the celebrated *danse à ventre*, which is an intolerably tiresome performance. The musicians tum-tum on native drums and drawl out a monotonous sing-song, and the women stand in front of the footlights and wriggle their bodies in the most ungainly attitudes. It is difficult to imagine how they prove alluring to any one.

The other notorious quarter in the Sharia Wagh-el-Birket and the Sharia Bab-el-Bahri is far more entertaining, and really pretty in its way. The former leads from the Hôtel Bristol to the square by Cook's offices, and the latter runs at right angles to it, connecting it with the Esbekiya Gardens.

In the Sharia Bab-el-Bahri are the principal Arab theatre, and other places of amusement, and there are always piano-organs or bands playing the latest music-hall or comic-opera airs. The whole street is a blaze of electric light. Its ends are taken up with cafés, and its pavements are crowded with vendors of tartlets, sweetmeats, meat on skewers, and sago in teacups ; while the cigarette-sellers have stalls that are works of art.

The scarlet British uniforms of Tommy Atkins recall you to a sense of reality. Tommy is for the most part behaving

very well, doing nothing worse than singing uproariously in chorus, though occasionally he grows so "blind" that he has to be taken home in a cab by his fellows. And an odd sight it makes to see half a dozen or even a dozen Tommy Atkinses, some "blind" and some leading the blind, crowded into a Cairo *arabeah* with a tarbushed negro on the box lashing a pair of white Arabs into a gallop. If Tommy is too uproarious, sooner or later he will attract the attention of the British military police riding majestically through the city in pairs. His favourite haunt is a bar at the corner, kept by a retired British sergeant with a Greek wife, which has an excellent name with the authorities, and a piano to accompany his choruses. It is surprising how well the Tommies can play an accompaniment.

The Sharia Wagh-el-Birket is a more dissipated street, though it is not so noisy or glary. For the whole of one side of it is taken up with the apartments of the wealthier courtesans, each with its balcony, over which its denizens hang in negligés of virgin white. In the half-light the tall, Eastern-looking houses, with their tiers of balconies with houris hanging over them in all sorts of fantastic garments and postures, loom up weird and romantic. Here you may see an occasional "scene" or fracas, but it is the exception.

The opposite side of the street is arcaded—and under its arcades are a succession of cafés, most of them filled with Arabs consuming strong liquors indirectly forbidden by their religion.

The Arab who wishes to break these ordinances without defying them, assures himself that champagne is a mineral water, and that spirits and ale and stout are not wines—perhaps because they are under a separate heading on the wine lists of restaurants. At these cafés he is generally drinking bitter ale or stout, and sometimes eating little dishes of meat or vegetables bought from the hawkers; if he is not smoking. In some of the cafés there are noisy bands of depraved-looking girls in comic-opera uniforms. The most dazzling glare comes from the great open bars where they sell cigarettes. The pavements are so crowded with

chairs that you can hardly pass along them ; and the road near the cafés, where the Arabs are sitting, is crowded with their gay little white asses patiently waiting for them. All sorts of street musicians wander about, many of them little boys about ten years old, who pick out popular airs on tinkling instruments. Sellers of foreign stamps are much in evidence.

Were it not for the little white asses standing with their forefeet on the pavement, or speeding down the street with a pitter-patter of their tiny feet and a jingle and flash of their silver neck-chains, and for the galloping white horses of the *arabeahs*, the Arab-haunted cafés of Cairo would be woefully inferior in picturesqueness to the cafés of Tunis ; the street is so confined compared to the broad Avenue Jules Ferry, up which the Tunisian Arabs seem to float like gorgeous butterflies in their light, bright, elegant robes. The Cairo Arab does not dress elegantly—at his best, his clothes are only clean and dignified. And one misses the trees.

There are other streets, like the Sharia Kamel, which have long lines of brilliantly lit cafés ; but the dullest kind of people frequent them. The glittering bars of Cairo are not really more interesting than other bars, though they are florider, and are tended by very grand young ladies. The *Abbas* theatre has its Covent Garden Balls. Here the British subaltern, especially he of the Guards, is fancy-free ; and he is sometimes extremely funny when he is "ragging" to the top of his bent.

When the moon hangs out her lantern, people make up large parties to ride out on donkeys to the Pyramids or the Tombs of the Caliphs. This is both picturesque and charming, though it is a long ride for donkeys to the Pyramids. The Tombs of the Caliphs look fairylike in the cool, white light under the dazzling sapphire sky ; and if you see it by moonlight, you know the full pregnancy of the saying, *As mysterious as the Sphinx*.

The thing I enjoyed most in Cairo by moonlight was to take an *arabeah* and drive to the deserted streets of the Arab city. To sit in the Sharia el-Nahassin with not

one other human being in sight—or at the most two or three figures from the “Arabian Nights” stealing silently away in the shadows, has a simply magical effect. Never do the hoary windows and minarets of the ancient Kalaun Mosque look so like lace-work, threaded out of marble by the hands of a Genie. Never does that procession, long drawn-out, of mosque and palace and fountain, present to the sky such a playful fancy of dome and minaret, balcony, arch, and *meshrebiya*’d oriel. I felt as if they had fallen asleep five hundred years ago, when Sultan Barkûk was carried to his long rest here, and as if I were the magic prince, privileged to look upon them for the last time before they awoke to all the world. There is nothing more romantic than a street purely mediæval by the light of an Egyptian moon.

From the Sharia el-Nahassin I used to drive up past the fine soaring arches of the Beit-el-Kadi, once the palace of the Fatimide Caliphs and under a mysterious archway to the Gamaliya. There is no street in Cairo like the Gamaliya at night. As you drive slowly down it to the old El-Nasr Gate, you pass here a street full of overhanging harem windows shuttered with *meshrebiya* centuries old; there a mediæval fountain with an arched Koran school above it, and a little farther on a mosque of the great period of Saracen building. Here you still find a gate to close the end of the street, which leads down to the Palace of Sultan Beibars; the tall *khans* of merchants, and the okelle of the poor are black and silent in the night. But the charm of the Gamaliya lies in this, that instead of being deserted it is apt, where the bright lights are streaming from a basement, to have a popular restaurant. On the night of the *Ashura* it is to the Gamaliya that the actors in that grim tragedy repair for supper, while the blood of their self-inflicted wounds is still pouring from their scalps. Even the Sharia el-Nahassin is hardly richer in old, forgotten buildings of the fantastic Middle Ages.

The *Molid-en-Nebbi* is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet. We drove back to Abbasiya to a splendid



spectacle late that night, for the richly decorated tabernacles which surrounded the vast square were a blaze of light, and full of holy men reciting the Koran, and of dancing and singing of religious natures, I supposed, the costumes being very fine I have never seen Ramadan in Egypt. In a rich city like Cairo the Arabian nights of Ramadan must be worth a book to themselves. About the most Arab and the least Arab spectacle I ever went to was the Opera in the Arab theatre. It was un-Arab, because it was all so perfectly done. It might have been a chef d'œuvre of mimicking the Orient in a Paris theatre. It was so Arab because its plot depended on a breach of Eastern etiquette. The scene was laid in the Sheikh's house in Mecca, and the actors all wore the dress of pure Arabs of Arabia. The scenery was very simple, the costumes were very gorgeous. Where the cloven foot of Christian civilisation showed was in the sentimental sentiment of the love-songs and the importance accorded to the women. The end would have come so much sooner in real life.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Entertainments of the Arabs

IT is the Arab, not the Englishman, who takes his pleasures sadly : his only regular amusement is hearing recitations from the Koran. When Arab boys go out for a jolly walk together, if they happen to start singing as boys will, they sing bits of the Koran, not bits of comic operas ; if you pass down any of the Arab quarters by night and hear music, it will be the Koran again. This is the chief kind of music, which you hear in the street except when a marriage party or a pilgrim from Mecca is being escorted home.

But the Arabs have charmingly written love-songs. The love-songs of the *fellahin* women in Upper Egypt are known to a few fortunate people from Mrs. Breasted's Translations. They are delicious poetry, but the solemn Arab spoils their effect by singing them in the same sort of voice, and with the same sort of music, as he sings the Koran. You imagine that he is limiting himself to hymns, when he is really indulging in passionate serenades.

They have their singing women of great charm, and their dancing women of no character, but you hear nothing of them by chance and nothing of them by design unless you take a good deal of trouble. The dancing women were all supposed to have been banished to Esna—Esna of all places—by a former Khedive. But you can see them in the Fish-market and the El Dorado café performing the *danse d ventre* and other alluring exercises—the best of their kind. Rod-el-Farag, the lower port of Cairo, has a row of cafés on the banks of the Nile where dancing goes on, but here the



AN EFFENDI HAVING HIS FORTUNE TOLD OUTSIDE THE ESBEKIYA GARDENS



# ARAB SANGEROID

Effendi sitting down in the middle of the road to read a letter  
mat-shop

In the background on the right is a human

performers are European, though the *danse à ventre* is generally part of their programme.

As far as can be seen by the naked eye, the Arab does not share the Jap's enthusiasm for the drama, though every Arab was born an actor. There is ostensibly but one Arab theatre in Cairo. Here they incline to a kind of operatic melodrama, on the lines of our comic opera without the fun or the scenery or the girls, but a similar mixture of music and dialogue.

I went there once with a Syrian friend and a rich young Egyptian, a man-about-town, who was very musical. The theatre was not much more substantial or costly in its fittings than a Japanese theatre, which is little more than a shed in the shape of a circus-tent, with matchwood partitions between its boxes. Half the boxes here had harem-grills like Sicilian nuns' churches. There were hardly any women visible; only *tarbûshes* in front and turbans behind. They were playing dear mad Oriental music when we went in. The Syrian was apologetic. He said, "These people have no music: it is all half tones." The Egyptian took up the cudgels. "What is music to you is not musical at all to them. If an Arab goes to the Opera he asks, 'What are they shrieking at?'" The Syrian retorted with a story about the Arab who went to the Opera at Paris, and did not care for any of the music except the tuning up of the orchestra. But they were the best of friends. The play began half an hour late. The audience had spent that half-hour in clapping for it. Its title pleased me very much. It was called *The Pardon that Killed*.

When the play opened five men in the Arab costume (of Arabia) were sitting on each side of the stage, with a black in a red dress, and another Arab always putting his head out of the door looking for something that was supposed to be going on behind the stage. They were sitting quite naturally. The King reclined on a sofa with a sham leopard's skin; the others were sitting up. There was an old man, with a long white beard, to show that he was the funny man; his sallies were much appreciated—everybody always clapped before they heard what he had to say. Then there was a

burst of Oriental music, and the King's wives came in. The chief wife was distinguished by wearing a dressing-gown, with a wide blue sash round her waist which had little red ends. She was an Egyptian-Jewess, the King, I should have said, wore a grand green satin dress under his red burnouse. They had a prologue which lasted a long time. In the first act you were given to understand that the King was a good man, who protected all the villages round him. His cousin, whose father had been killed by the King's father, was plotting revenge. But he would be punished by the old man with the white beard. I slept through the rest of that act and only woke when they began to play Algerian music between the acts. The music was very like the tum-tumming you get in Japanese theatres, but it seemed appropriate. In the second act there was a tree in the middle of the stage, and the man who was believed to be killed came in dressed all in white. The last thing I remember of that act was our Syrian friend's protesting to the Egyptian that there is no Oriental music, that there are only Oriental tunes. The Egyptian's reply was so long that I went to sleep again. Then came a harem scene with two slaves talking. They went on and on. I slept for the rest of the play.

Yet I believe it was quite a good play for those who knew enough Arabic to understand the dialogue. Unfortunately for the ordinary tourist, there was very little action or scenery—it was all talk. Some Arabic plays have almost as much singing in them as a comic opera, and the singing is generally excellent.

There is one very famous Arab actor in Cairo who seems to be quite a Danjuro in the privileges he can give himself with the public

I have been told that there are quite a number of secret theatrical performances, where the play always stops directly a European enters. The dramas may of course be Nationalist ebullitions of a kind which requires keeping secret. A friend of mine had a Berberine servant who was devoted to him. This Berberine was very fine and large about these secret theatres, and was always making appointments to take

my friend there "to-morrow night," but to-morrow night invariably fell through on some pretext. "The chief performer was ill," or anything else that was necessary when the actual time came to go. There cannot be anything about them to make them more immoral than hashish dens, and the love-shops of the Fishmarket, and the gambling hells kept by Levantines. I don't know how much of a gambler the Arab is. Cairo swarms with gambling dens kept by Levantines, who change their nationality like a chameleon, when they are raided, so as to involve proceedings in one consular court after another. All sorts of swindling goes on, the favourite games being baccarat and, save the mark ! backgammon. It seems clever to gamble over backgammon ; it must be so hard to get a run for your money.

Of still more concern to the police are the hashish dens and houses of ill-fame. The use of hashish is prohibited with savage earnestness, but it is not prevented if an important personage is giving a dinner-party. The highest compliment he can pay his guests is to take them to hashish afterwards, instead of a theatre or music-hall, as he would in England. And he can get served without difficulty. But it is almost impossible for an Englishman, in the ordinary way, to get served at a hashish den ; he is at once suspected of being in league with its suppressors. Much caution is preserved with any customer. There are various doors to pass, with little wickets in them, through which the porter can survey the intruder. The keepers of hashish dens are more often raided and change their nationality oftener than any other servants of the devil, though there was a famous member of the demi-monde, living opposite Shepherd's Hotel, who almost established a record for the number of nations to which she had belonged.

One is impelled to the conclusion that the Egyptian seeks entertainment for his body rather than his mind. In the evening, which he devotes to amusement, his ordinary recreations are talk, drink, and vice. To do him justice, he is mean about his vices. If he drinks the forbidden stimulants of the foreigner, he does not spend much on them.

It is only his regularity at the café that makes him worth considering as a customer, and he spends much more time on talking to his men-friends than the female charmers of the Fishmarket and the Sharia Wagh-el-Birket, popularly known as the Esbekiya Street.

The Egyptian pays interminable calls upon his friends, with nothing to enliven them but conversation, coffee, and tobacco. It is indeed lucky for him that tobacco is cheap in Egypt.

How the café-keeper lives in Egypt is a mystery to me, unless the Egyptian subscribes to a café as he would to a club. He never seems to be doing anything for the good of the house, except hiring a pipe for some pitiful coin. He smokes, reads the café's newspaper, plays dominoes, talks to his friends, or ogles the foreign ladies. He seems to do anything rather than order drinks—except in the Esbekiya Street, where he sits and sips the beverages forbidden by the Koran, with a dear little white donkey waiting for him in the gutter.

When he is in a more licentious mood he goes to the café in the Esbekiya Street, where a band of white female slaves discourses the lowest class of music, or to see dancing women whose dancing consists only of suggestive movements of their bodies—an ineffably dull performance in any other respect. The Fishmarket appeals more powerfully to him than to a European. This is a quarter of Cairo infested by the *Ghawazee* dancers and Jewish and Levantine and Italian women of pleasure. Some of them are beautiful and fascinating women. But most of them are monsters, with no attraction but their great passionate eyes. The Arabs like large women. I have said elsewhere what a horrible sight it is to go through the Fishmarket when these women are hanging about for patrons. It is bad enough to see the Oriental Jewesses sitting on the pavement, with their handsome bare legs heavily ancleted and stretched out to attract attention, but it is worse to see a pretty Italian woman with her slender, neatly stockinged legs confined in anclets to show that she is Orientalised—a creature at the beck and call of



Egyptian debauchees. The Italian women of pleasure have their names on brass plates outside their doors.

The Arab goes a good deal to the sort of open-air theatre which is run during the summer at the Ghezira end of the Nile Bridge with European performers, who do the usual music-hall turns.

A café with plenty of electric light and a gramophone or a piano-organ or, better than all, a female string band is exciting enough for the Arab in the ordinary way. To make up for this he has a passion for attending weddings and the receptions of pilgrims from Mecca, who are always welcomed like prodigal sons

In either case you know that something is on foot, because the street leading up to it hung, sometimes for half a mile, with little red and white flags, of the Khedivial emblem and the inevitable texts, mixed with large tin lanterns to attract the attention of friends by night. There is no difficulty about identifying the house at which the celebration is taking place, because a sort of marquee will have been erected outside it—a most picturesque affair—lined with brilliantly coloured texts from the Koran and packed with chairs. The entertainment which goes on in this tent is of the most sombre gaiety—selections from the Koran, sedate and dignified conversation and speeches. The speeches are delivered with fluency, feeling, and graceful motions; the Egyptian is a speechifier born.

An Arab procession, which is much the same, whether its object is a pilgrim or a wedding, is a highly picturesque affair. By day it consists of mirror-bearers, bands of barbaric music mounted on camels in gorgeous scarlet trappings decorated with cowrie shells and bits of looking-glass, bagpipe-players and standard-bearers on foot, sumptuous palanquins of old dark wood inlaid with ivory and silver and mother-of-pearl slung between two camels, a swarm of sheikhs on white asses, and a troupe of jesters and mountebanks to amuse the crowd.

I always seized my kodak when I heard the bagpipes and cymbals and tum-tum drums of Oriental thanksgiving

There are night processions too, but they are much simpler ; there is often not even a band—chanting taking its place. The picturesque feature is the use of the *mesh'al*, a staff with a cylindrical frame of iron at its top filled with flaming wood ; there can be any number up to five of these cressets on one staff. The pilgrim from Mecca and the bridegroom on his *zeffeh* are alike lighted by these *mesh'als*. There is a still grander affair of a frame with four circular tiers of small lamps—the top one revolving, which is used in a high-class *zeffeh* to the accompaniment of hautboys and drums—the favourite time being in the middle of the night. We used to be awakened by them in Cairo itself at the back of the Hôtel Continental. And I shall have more to say about them in the chapter on Arab domestic processions.

## CHAPTER X

### An Arab Bank Holiday: the Shem-en-Nesim

WE put off seeing the Barrage at the head of the Delta, *the Barrage par excellence*, till the end of our visit to Cairo, because we wished the vegetation to be as forward as possible, and we had been told that the *Shem-en-Nesim* at the Barrage was one of the sights of Egypt. *Shem-en-Nesim* means "The Smelling of the Zephyr," and it is a Christian feast held on the Easter Monday of the Copts and Greeks; but the Arabs all keep it, and every one goes out into the country for a picnic on that day, because the *Shem-en-Nesim* is supposed to mark the beginning of the season of the *Khamsin*, the dreaded hot winds.

We had been promised a private launch for the trip, but the launch behaved like a motor car when it is wanted, so we went down in the ordinary steamer of the tramway company, and would not have missed it for anything; it was so very Levantine.

It was pleasant to go on the Nile again just before leaving the country, for it brought back our old days in Upper Egypt so vividly, the *gyassas* flying before the stiff north wind, the usual woman doing her washing on the shore of the Nile, with her silver anklets gleaming through the water, the usual water-sellers filling their skins were there at the start as the Levantines were crowding on board, bringing their lunch in stay-boxes and cardboard hat-boxes.

When the boat had once started we were soon in an atmosphere of palm-groves and *sakiyas* and buffaloes. The white-winged *gyassas* were gay with the little scarlet flags

used for marriages and the return of pilgrims from Mecca.

The villages here are debauched with foreign-looking villas; they are almost suburban compared with the villages of the Upper Nile, which look as if they had been put up by the Pharaohs.

To make up for this we have on the one side the embattled front of the Citadel, with the soaring dome and minarets of the Mehemet Ali Mosque, and on the other the hot desert with the two great Pyramids behind it purpling above the acacia avenues. These hardly ever left us till we approached the Barrage. It was all so like the Upper Nile; the great pied kingfisher flew beside us, the buffalo was wallowing in the water like a hippopotamus. But the *sakiyas* and *shadufs* all had shelters of trees and boughs. What a windy place the Nile always is!

Arabs are easy people to cater for on a steamer; they require no seats, as they always squat on the ground, and they don't mind how bad the accommodation is so long as it is cheap. We sped down past low green banks and pink deserts with the Citadel Mosque and the Pyramids growing more fairy-like than ever in the distance which enchants, and all of a sudden saw the Barrage rising up before us. It is typically French, rather like the miniature Lourdes put up by the pious French in the gardens of the Vatican as an apology for their nation. It is an imposing castellated sort of affair, with minarets in the centre and a campanile at each end, and more minarets and more campanili in the woods. But it was not of the slightest use as a barrage until an English engineer, Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff, made it practicable at a cost of four hundred and fifty thousand pounds rather than allow such a picturesque landmark to be taken down.

I believe that it does its work well now, and accept common report as to that. I was much more occupied with the exquisite gardens into which the fort built to guard the Barrage has been converted. The bastions lined with flowers had quite an Alma Tadema effect. The first thing we saw on landing was the performing dog-faced baboon



GREEKS DANCING IN THE GARDENS AT THE DELTA BARRAGE ON THE BANK HOLIDAY  
OF CAIRO—THE SHEM-EN-NESIM.



BLIND SAINI AT THE DELTA BARRAGE.

with his master, and the marionette show, which looks like a doll's house, that we had so often seen at the various festivals.

Over every hedge poured fragrant flowers like roses and honeysuckle. I was curious to see how the Egyptians, Arabs by religion but not by race, took their pleasures. A favourite form of amusement for a Gypsy was to sit with his coat off, singing and drumming with his heels. The Arab groups crowding these lawns were nearly all men and boys. I thought at first that half of them must be acrobats. For they brought squares of carpet with them; but it appeared that they were merely good Mohammedans who were going to say their prayers at the usual times. The favourite actual game of the Egyptians was playing at sideways-leapfrog.

The Greeks were decidedly more interesting to watch, for they were dancing their national dances as they do on Easter Monday in the temple of Zeus Olympius at Athens, which has arrangements for such base uses. They danced very well, and some of their young women were extremely beautiful. These girls were in their national dress, in which a fine lawn chemisette plays a great part; with their classic faces, elegant figures, and spirited dancing they made a charming contrast against the bamboo groves and trees tangled over with bougainvilleas. The Greek men are good-looking too, but unfortunately inclined to the shiny black clothes and black wideawake hats dear to the hearts of plebeians all over the world. The Greek men took their coats and waistcoats off to dance, but they were distanced by the Levantines, who some of them came dressed like gymnasium professionals, while their women took their dresses off and sat in their petticoats because they were hot. The effect of a Levantine woman, usually adipose by the time that she is thirty, sitting with her dress off in a public garden, letting off steam, is simply paralysing, especially when she wears a white wreath instead of a hat. There is no reason why any one should feel thirsty in Egypt, for, whenever it is hot enough, there are boys selling lemonade, boys selling oranges, boys with water *kullas* balanced on their shoulders every few yards. I saw

one Levantine paying a pretty Biblical attention to a friend : he was anointing his beard.

As the day grew hotter all the Arabs took off their coats and hats and some their trousers as well. This does not signify in an Arab, who wears such things over his national costume. When they had shed their clothes they sat down in rings under the trees. They did not put their clothes on again when it was time to move, they simply carried them away on their heads. A few Levantine women had come in black satin dominoes ; they did not take them off, though they felt far too hot in them. The Arabs seemed to bring anything they liked into the gardens with them, even a camel, so long as they kept it muzzled to prevent it lurching off the cascades of bougainvilleas and the heavy-scented white blossoms which were hanging on the daturas like fairy lights. I was sorry for this ; I wished to know if a camel's stomach could stand datura poison. In one place we came upon quite a cotillon of Greeks dancing in rings to the music of a base viol and two fiddles playing an Oriental tune. The viol-player had a feather. When they had done dancing they took off their boots and sat down under a cabbage tree.

The blaze of flowers here was simply wonderful. The prickly pears were covered with blossoms which looked like yellow sea-anemones ; the roses were growing in thickets as azaleas grow in Japan, and everywhere was the little mauve flower like thrift, which takes the place of the daisy in Egypt. The pools were gay with the ancient emblems of Lower and Upper Egypt, the papyrus and the lotus. The Greek man takes off his coat to play games, the Greek woman ties up her head. Which is the most sensible ?

I shall not readily forget that day at the Barrage. I have seldom seen lovelier gardens, bordered as they are by the broad blue waters of the Nile, and broken by little green valleys containing clear streams and rich thickets of bamboo. Every rise and depression is taken advantage of, and there is hardly a level rood in the gardens. The trees are linked together with flowering creepers and lianas, as the elms are linked with vines in Lombardy.



One of the chief charms on the day of the *Shem-en-Nesim* was the way in which every alley was filled with natives in brilliant dresses and their stalls and their asses and beggars and water-sellers. It was as if the Ataba-el-Khadra had emptied itself into the Barrage gardens. We ate our lunch, which Ramidge's precious Mustapha had been carrying behind us, in an arbour of tropical lianas flaming with blossom.

On the way back the boat was a pandemonium. The *reis*, who takes the place of a captain on a Nile boat, kept shouting the same thing down the tube to Mist' Ibrahim and Mohammed somebody. At intervals he blew a whistle to attract their attention. I asked Ramidge, who had acquired a remarkable familiarity with Low Arabic in the Sudan, what the captain kept saying. One imagined that it must be to tell them to make the boat go faster, as she was only going about three miles an hour. But what he really was saying was "May you be eaten by fleas!" which was probably another way of telling them to get up more steam. This was not the only thing he said, but the curses were too picturesque to translate for publication in England. To add to the noise, several steamers were returning to Cairo side by side, and most of the Arabs on them, however well-dressed, were enjoying themselves characteristically by chanting the Koran with the drawn-out hoarseness of a railway whistle. Even people in golf-collars were chanting the Koran. But if collars were a qualification for Parliamentary suffrage Egypt would be ready for it at once.

While this awful noise was going on, while the boats were so crowded with squatting Arabs that there was hardly room to put your feet down for standing, I was saved from swearing by hearing a sweet little girl about four say: "By the grace of God what a number of people there are!" She said it in Arabic—I give Ramidge's translation.

Many of the boats which flew past before the wind were decorated with palm-leaves. It was very pleasant running up before a strong north breeze, with *sakiyas* under green mimosas reminding us of those unforgettable days when we

were going up the Nile to Khartûm ; and with the horizon on our left bounded by the aerial domes and flying minarets of the great mosque on the brow of Saladin's Citadel ; and the horizon on our right bounded by the misty, purple forms of the two great pyramids of Gizeh soaring above the palm groves. The Pyramids and the Citadel ! It was pleasant, to have an hour to gaze at them and meditate about this wonderful half year of my life on this, our last excursion in Egypt.

## CHAPTER XI

### The Cairo Zoo

THE Cairo Zoo has many things to recommend it, and the best of all is that you only have to pay a small piastre—an Egyptian penny—to go in. This is because the natives would not pay any more, and it is supposed to exist for their education.

A more futile supposition there never was. The Egyptian mind that is to say, the mind of the Egyptian masses, has not got beyond the *afrit* stage. They do not go to see the animals as zoological specimens, which have nearly all of them the further interest of being found in their sovereign's dominions; they look upon them as evil spirits whom the Khedive has compelled to assume the form of animals and shut up in cages. I was there one day with an Arab-speaking friend when we came upon an Egyptian shaking his fist at a crocodile, an innocent young thing of about seven feet long. I asked my friend to interpret his remarks, because I saw that he was cheeking the crocodile. "You eat my brother," he said, "and pretended that he was drowned." Now we have got you! Yah! Yah!

"That's nothing," explained my friend, to a man I saw being hustled away by the police from the giraffe cage. He was accused of creating a disturbance by incessantly opening his umbrella in front of the giraffe. As every Englishman in Egypt takes the police to task when he thinks that they are exceeding their duty, my friend—it was Mr. Perkins—stopped the policeman while he asked the man if he had any explanation of his conduct to give.

"Yes," said the prisoner. "I wanted to make the giraffe grow as small as a rat"

"What!" said Perkins.

"It's a well-known thing," answered the native, "that the giraffe expands with the sun to his present size, and that he is really only as small as a rat at night. It is believed, but it is not proved, that if you can get him into the shade during the day he rapidly decreases in size, and I wish to try."

The police told Perkins that the man had been arrested more than once for having broken into the gardens at night. Perkins questioned him and found that he had only broken in to see the giraffe as small as a rat. The police said that this idea is very prevalent among natives.

The Zoological Gardens of Cairo are an adorable place. The garden is an old royal garden; it belonged to the Gizeh Palace of Ismail Pasha, so it has old trees and gorgeous wildernesses of flowering shrubs and all the gim-crack Oriental pleasaunces of a popular holiday-making temple in Japan, like the Temple of Kwannon at Asakusa. The Japanese would have put a temple into it boldly; the Egyptians were content with toy bridges and delicious little summer-houses on the tops of wooded knolls; not to mention aberrations of taste like paths with coloured pebbles cemented on them in patterns. There was something very appropriate about turning Ismail Pasha's palace into a Zoo.

The gaudily attired blacks, who acted as keepers to the animals, looked like part of an Exhibition themselves. They and the climate give the Cairo Zoo a chance which is denied to the collections of London, Antwerp, and Paris. In any Zoological Gardens the chief interest lies in the tropical animals—the largest beasts of prey and pachiderms and the most outrageous birds, all come from the tropics, and the humans which go with them are blacks. At Cairo you see them as nearly as possible under their own conditions. Directly you enter you are surrounded by enormous macaws and toucans and hornbills of metallic blues and reds and greens, chained to perches. They look as if they ought to

be there without being put there. A little way farther on was a porcupine with rather a human little baby, and the gentleman egret went up to relieve the lady egret from her duties of sitting on the nest with the politeness of an American husband. The sandgrouse were almost pushing themselves through the floor of their cage in their anxiety to be invisible in the rather scanty sand. I should have said that the lady egret, directly her husband took her watch, went to the food box, and, picking out a sardine, washed it before she ate it. Perhaps it went down more easily when it was wet. The Secretary bird, with its wicked little eye and great horny bill, stood in the attitude of a man who was going to take a dive, wondering if a snake would turn up before he was too utterly bored. He is as sacred as the birds and beasts which had the good fortune to be gods in the days of the Pharaohs. You are fined I don't know how much if you kill a Secretary bird, because the Secretary bird, which has very long horny legs, spends his entire time in hunting up snakes and eating them. In captivity it is hard to keep him supplied with cobras and horned vipers, so he is fed with something more ordinary, sardines, perhaps. I forget.

If I had seen that idiot of a native keep opening his umbrella in front of the giraffe, I should have thought he was trying to take a photograph of the baby giraffe, which ought to grow up a very tall child, because his father was seventeen feet high and its mother only a foot or two less. They spent most of the day standing in the blazing sun in front of their sleeping-apartments, with their little one between them. He was only about twelve feet high, but they were very proud of him, quite human in their pride and affection. Sometimes the father put on a determined air and stood with his four legs planted firmly out like a propping horse, on each side of the water trough. But as a rule his expression was as mild and foolish as that of the people on the other side of the railings, who were making remarks about him.

The prettiest parts of the garden—which had thickets of

red and rose hibiscus in flower and bridges with bougainvilleas pouring over them like the arbours trailing with wistaria round the lakes of Japanese temples—had no wild-beast cages in them, and the gardens are badly off for crocodiles and hippopotami, which is inexcusable in Egypt, where they can be sent down by river from places where they are positive nuisances.

We went into one of the little summer-houses on a knoll which was a perfect maze of flowering tropical trees, and then we realised to the full what a paradise these royal gardens were. For on the one side we seemed to be almost touching the Pyramids, though they were some miles off, and on the other the Mokattams and the mosque—crowned citadel, which forms one of the finest skylines in the world, and the Tombs of the Mamelukes, with their fantastic domes and minarets, formed the horizon.

The first time we went to the Zoo we were anxious to learn as much as we could about the fauna of the Sudan, because we were just about to start for Khartûm. I remember that my first impression was one of disappointment at finding that there were no parrots from the Sudan in the collection, because one of my joys in the Australian forest used to be to watch the communities of brilliant parakeets that would collect under the thick foliage of the light-wood trees, or to see a big flock of parrots or cockatoos come down on a crop—not much fun of course for the farmer, but thrilling for the sportsman who was prayed to shoot them down or scare them off. Whether the Sudan has them or not, there were none in the Zoo. But there were dhurra-birds and fire-finches, with their brilliant patches of red, and darling little palm-doves and yellow-headed spotted sand doves.

For birds the Cairo Zoo is especially rich in the larger falconidæ and in the crane tribe. The grey heron soon becomes your intimate friend as you go up the Nile, but they had here a purple heron, the most pompous ornithological person I ever saw. He maintained the attitude of having known Rameses the Great quite well when he was young. You saw this in the expression of supernatural wisdom which

he adopted as he sat on one leg, though he was really looking into the little cemented pool in his den, which was only about two inches deep, to see if any fish had suddenly come into the water. Even he was not so antediluvian-looking as the Baleniceps Rex, the Whale-headed King in the garden of the palace at Khartûm.

A bird which interested me very much was the francolin, which looks something like a small guinea-fowl. It is the Shah of Persia's favourite game-bird, and it would have required all the influence of Russia to prevent the last Shah but one, Musaffer-ed-Din, from executing any person who was rash enough to kill one. It did not seem to me much of a zoological specimen to get excited about in a country to which lions and tigers occasionally stray.

I never knew any lions and tigers and leopards on such good terms as these were with their keepers. The big lion came to the rails to be scratched the moment his Nubian came near him; the Nubian got into his cage with him and lay down and pretended to be asleep with a hand outstretched. The lion was very angry; he wished to play, and insisted on the Nubian waking. Whereupon he became all leonine smiles. He obviously loved his keeper. Even the leopards were most friendly. The keeper went into a cage with a large leopard and punched him like gentlemen of the fancy punch a bull dog. The leopard thought it awful fun, but it seemed an odd way of getting to a leopard's heart.

Evidently from the pride with which the keeper of that section conducted us to the reptile house, the most popular feature of the Zoo with most people was seeing the chameleons shoot out their disgusting tongues at flies. They had comparatively few reptiles for a land in which there must be a good many; the most interesting being the gecko, a kind of lizard which looks like its own skeleton, and Cleopatra's asp, the tiny cerastes, or horned viper, never more than a foot or two long, though it is tolerably fat and flat. It is the same pinky, gold colour as the desert sand itself and its horns look more like glorified eyebrows than anything else, but it is a wicked little beast. We were glad to escape from that

horrible reptile-house back into the gardens, where the unsentimental banana was flowering gorgeously side by side with our English jessamine, and to look at oddities like the enormous crown pigeons of New Guinea, which are about the size of turkeys; the crimson cardinal birds of Brazil, and the orange capuchin, and the blue, ruby-cheeked finch. But the funniest specimens of all were the babiroussa, half pig and half deer, one of the three animals which forgot to be destroyed in the flood, being preserved on some very high mountains in Celebes which rivalled the feat of Mount Ararat, though the fact is not mentioned in the Bible; the porcupine and her baby, and the brindled gnu, with its extraordinary whiskers.

As it only costs a penny farthing, some Egyptians do go to the Zoo, especially the women, and trail about like poor Japanese in a temple. But its principal use is to make a promenade for Tommy Atkins. It is within a walk of Cairo if he is too hard up to pay for a tram, and I think he is admitted free if he is in uniform, a proviso which does not really signify, as he is never out of his uniform, except when he is playing lawn tennis. Tommy thoroughly enjoys it. He is never tired of watching the black keepers making the animals play tricks, which they do whenever a well-off-looking foreigner passes. They only expect a tip of a penny. I used to go there with my pockets full of small piastres, and if I had only lived near enough I should have liked to have gone into the Zoological Gardens of Gizeh every morning after breakfast for the little airing I take as a pick-me-up before I begin the serious business of the day.

P.S.—There was one other adorable feature about this place. So many wild birds, huge Egyptian kites, and a fine variety of water-fowl from storks downwards, thought the enclosures in which the specimens from other countries were imprisoned such nice places that they came and settled there of their own accord. It was a pity that crocodiles could not imitate their example; the place was rather short of crocodiles, and the few they had were not long enough.



## CHAPTER XII

### The Arab and Bedawin Markets of Cairo

THE Market of the Afternoon, which takes place in the early part of every afternoon, the Tuesday market at Gizeh, and the Monday market at the village behind—some miles behind—the Mena house, are the best places in Cairo for studying, that is for kodaking, primitive native life.

The Market of the Afternoon is a fascinating place. I often wandered there alone, and generally found no other European in the place. It is held in the huge square beyond the Meidan Rumeleh under the walls of the Citadel. And here the East asserts itself untrammelled by the conventions of civilisation.

Some people are frightened of its pickpockets and its hooligans; its dirt and its fleas are more formidable, but I did not find that I carried many of these reminiscent little animals away with me from here, not more than I might collect in a tramway—a drop in the ocean beside the consequences of a visit to the Coptic churches in Old Cairo.

The market begins to unfold itself almost directly you are past the great Mosque of Sultan Hassan, which is so leisurely in rebuilding itself. There are people lying asleep in the road; and huge cakes of dates and dirt which have been crushed into lumps in camel bags. There are people selling bread slung in rings on their arms; people selling long and juicy lettuces; people selling fried meats of uncertain origin; and there are Eastern noises.

The market itself is held on a raised platform, raised, I think, by the accident of level roads being cut round it.

You climb the steps and you find yourself in a scene more suggestive of a Nile village than the capital of the Caliphs. All the beggars in Cairo seem to be enjoying the make-believe of selling and buying.

The favourite form of shop and shelter is an empty warehouse packing-case laid on its side. It is high enough for people who sit on the ground to squat in (and conduct a restaurant if need be). The barbers' shops are mostly umbrellas. The patients who are having their heads shaved sit as close to the stick as possible. The barber hops round like a sparrow.

I can't say much about the old-clothes sellers : their neighbourhood smelt too close for me to go very close to it. The garments were hung on some sort of racks under some sort of shelter, and the *tout ensemble* was really not so very unlike a sale of costumes at a Kensington shop. The metal merchants were much more to my taste than the rag merchants. They knelt on the ground and arranged their wares in the dust in the true Eastern jumble-sale style. The dust makes a nice soft counter, and you can do your accounts on it if you can write.

Rough tools and agricultural implements, battered lamps and second-hand brass are the staples of the metal merchant ; but old bottles play a not unimportant part. Brass enters so largely into the furniture of the Egyptian that there is an extensive business to be done in its remnants. He has brass lamps, brass fittings for pipe and waterpipe, brass-handled knives, long-handled brass saucepans for making coffee, brass coffee-sets (pot, tray, cups, and saucers), brass censers and candlesticks ; the water-seller has brass essence sprinklers, goblets, saucers, and tumbler-carriers ; the lemonade-sellers have resplendent brass fittings ; the noble brass hot-water jugs of restaurants are not much more likely to come to the rag market than the *Kursee*, the chased brass tables and stools, and the fine braziers and stands of the rich ; all Arabs use the brass basins called *tisht*, and the brass jugs with narrow

curling spouts called *ibreek*<sup>1</sup> for their ablutions. But there are a variety of smaller brass objects which you may pick up out of the dust at the Market of the Afternoon—such as little chased boxes, fantastic scissors, openwork cigarette cases, old-fashioned scriveners' inkpots, manacles for the punishment of harem women, bangles, and charms.

The old folding lanterns, with sides of waxed paper, exactly like the lanterns used by riksha boys in Japan to-day, have their brass tops richly chased sometimes; the water vessels may be charming alike in form and decoration, but one of the best things to collect is coffee-sets.

The little brass cups, which look much more suitable for eggs, and are hardly stable enough to hold an egg without spilling it, are not actually used for the coffee; they are really saucers which hold little china cups. They are sometimes exquisitely shaped and decorated. It is always worth while picking up a beautiful one, they make such charming presents if you can persuade yourself to part with them. Once in a way you find a handsome tray ornamentally battered, not often. You have a better chance with coffee-pots. An accident happening to an old and beautiful one may relegate it to the rag-and-bone man. A shilling will often set the damage right when you get back to England, and you are the possessor of a lovely object, for the coffee-pots of the rich are made with great elegance.

Daggers are cheap and numerous. Their blades will be damascened with a phrase from the Koran. The brass candlesticks to be bought here for a shilling or two would be cheap at ten times the price in England.

Most people enjoy the bargaining more than what they buy in such places. The bargain-hunter in the Market of the Afternoon will do best if he looks out for damaged objects

<sup>1</sup> The regular Brassmarket is in the sort of piazza between the Sûk-en-Nahassin, the Bazar of the Copper- and Brass-workers and the Beit-el-Kadî, the grand old Arabic palace just restored, which was once the court of the Grand Kadî, and earlier still was the palace of the Caliph. The number of stalls in it varies: the most important is the bottom except one, almost under the shadow of the Kalaun Mosque; it is always there, as is the bottom stall, a much humbler affair, but the others are only there at certain market hours.

which have seen much better days Brass will always mend, and the more it has been used the better it will clean. Never ask the price of anything. The impulse of the pauper dealer at the Market of the Afternoon is to put an impossible value on anything of which a foreigner asks the price. He thinks at once that the object is one on which foreigners set a value, and he thinks that all foreigners are fools. Glance over his stock, settle in your own mind the price at which a thing will be a real bargain, tap it with your stick and show him the small piastre or piastre, or the few piastres which you intend to give for it, and if he will not take it go and start bargaining for something with the man at the next stall. You are sure to have offered him too much for it according to the native ideas, and he will call you back. If he hasn't called you back before you leave the market offer him a little more if you covet the article to that extent. Everything takes time in the East: a man may be perfectly willing to take your price, but he likes to do a little talking and chaffering over it. Don't waste time talking to him; do your photographing; look at the professional story-tellers in their rings of listeners, the snake-charmers, the gamblers, the people with performing monkeys, the donkeys having their parties as they roll in the dust at the edge of the market. While you are amusing yourself the dealers to whom you have made offers are making up their minds. It worries them when you shop in this inadvertent way. They are afraid that you will forget them and not come back to make another offer. Quite often they curse you instead. I like being cursed: I try and photograph them while they are doing it.

I was never molested at the Market of the Afternoon. Sometimes a policeman would follow me about in a friendly way to see that I had no trouble. The police, though they are Nationalists in their sympathies, are very polite to Englishmen: they will even listen to his advice in the execution of their duty. It was a wonderful sight that market, with its long rows of ragged dealers with various expressions of cunning engendered by their hard struggles against prices,

squatting in their picturesque rags in the dust with their poor little jumble-stock spread on the ground before them. The paths between them were as regular as streets. In the centre of the market were all manner of odd restaurants. Some like our coffee stalls but with grand eaves, others on the ground in front of the packing-cases in which their keepers sat, others wandering round on trays. All very neat and with an inordinate collection of pickles. From the relative proportions of them which you see you would think that the Arabs eat pickles as we eat meat and meat as we eat pickles. And I don't blame them, considering the look of their meat.

On the further edge were the ineffable stalls of used and abused clothes.

Not at all late in the afternoon buyers and sellers got tired of business and went to the shows, which included a large collection of Persian pictures in mother-of-pearl frames. I tried in vain to buy these. The story-teller was much the most popular of the performers. The policeman said that he was giving them the "Life of Abu'Zeyd," who married Kar, the daughter of Karda, the Shereef of Mecca, and had a son called Barakat, who went through marvellous adventures. It is always the story of Abu'Zeyd when you ask what these people are telling. The performing monkeys were very much like the performing monkeys are anywhere else. The snakes were as dull as any other educated snakes. The salient feature in nearly any snake-charming is the boredom of the snakes. They will do anything they are told which is not much trouble; they don't mind lying on their backs pretending to be dead for any length of time. A snake knows when he has to die because his master breathes down his throat a great puff of his malodorous breath. Some day the master will go too far and won't be able to bring the snake round. The moment he smells his master's breath the snake faints and goes quite stiff and is laid on the ground, belly upwards, like a stale eel. It is when they really are wanted to do something more than hang from their master's nose, or wrap round his throat like a fur boa, or stand upright to half their length, that snakes are disappointing. I never saw one

even try to dance : the only thing I ever saw a snake try to do in these performances was to sneak back into his bag when his master wasn't looking. Only a mongoose can lend him any animation, and the mongoose has to be carefully watched lest he should eat the poor seven-foot cobra. The mongoose would make short work of these formidable-looking cobras without their poisoned fangs. The Egyptian snake-charmers generally use the cobra-naja, about six or seven feet long and as thick as your wrist.

A European misses the best part of the snake-charmer's performance, which is his conversation. He talks incessantly, and almost as incessantly passes the tambourine round for piastres.

It is only now and again that he remembers that he has any snakes, and picks them up from where they are lying trying to get to sleep in the sand. So convinced are the crowd that the snakes have had their fangs extracted and will not do any harm that the charmer often has considerable difficulty in preventing the crowd from encroaching. I wonder shall I ever see snakes swaying their bodies gracefully and manifesting signs of pleasure when the charmer pipes to them. It may be that the music is at fault, and that the snakes would do more if the charmer had a piano-organ and played two-steps.

The favourite gambling games they used to play at the Market of the Afternoon were a game which needed a board with squares marked on it—their roulette or fantan, I suppose—and a game played with sticks. There were four small flat sticks about eight inches long and not quite an inch broad, with one side white and the other side dark, and a board with four rows of squares on it ; the sticks were thrown against a wall or a tree or anything handy, and something happened according to the number of them which turned up white. The dark side didn't seem to count unless they turned up all dark, which was the best throw, like zero at roulette. According to the throw the players move their bits of brick and red tile, a sort of beggars' draughts. It is dreadfully dull to watch, but the Arabs find it absorbing to play.

One sunny Tuesday morning I went to the cattle-market at



A STALL AT THE GIZEH MARKET

In the background is a woman with a mattress on her head



A COPPERSMITH'S STALL AT THE GIZEH MARKET

This market takes place once a week at the village of Gizeh on the way to the Pyramids



Gizeh, half way to the Pyramids. It is not only a cattle sale. The people, I suppose, like farmers in other parts of the world, enjoy spending their hard-gotten gains on cheap fripperies, therefore one half of the fair is divided up into lanes of squatting figures selling beads of scarlet celluloid, to suggest the coral of *bedawin* heirlooms, and kohl bottles, gay cottons, sweets, spices, and household articles like copper water-vessels of fine fantastic shapes. But really the most interesting things were the cheap attempts at jewellery, which were most decorative.

The camel-market was the most fascinating part of the cattle-fair; camels when they are about a day old, with white hair as fluffy as wool and an innocent expression, are such nice little beasts. And the people who come to sell camels are mostly Arish men and other desert Arabs, hawk-faced, hawk-eyed, sun-blackened, mightily picturesque in their striped head-shawls and garments of coarse wool.

But the other country market in the village beyond the Mena House is far and away the most striking of the three, for it is held in a grove of palm-trees on the edge of the inundation when the Nile is high, and the people who come to it are chiefly *bedawins* of a very handsome tribe. I saw lovelier women here than anywhere in Egypt, wearing a striking and unusual costume with a great deal of handsome jewellery. There was nothing for a foreigner to buy here—nobody thought of his existence; but there was a fascinating row of native linen drapers sitting on the ground under cloths stretched on sticks, and this market was primitive enough for the natives who came to it to empty their produce—onions, and corn or any other grain—in heaps on the ground. I wondered how they took away what they did not sell. They sat round their heaps in families; there were no well-kept lanes here—the whole thing was higgledy-piggledy, and the only outstanding figure was the donkey-barber, who was doing a roaring trade. The donkeys maintained their usual attitude of indifference while they were being clipped, but the camels grumbled and scolded and threatened the whole time.

It was really rather an extraordinary sight, worthy of the

Sudan, all those dark, handsome Arabs in their extraordinary costumes sitting in that exquisite palm-grove round their piled-up heaps of grain with a background of kneeling camels and tethered asses. It was a photographer's paradise—the women had no objection to being photographed, and were so primitive in their ideas that they did not know that a negative of a pretty savage is worth a small piastre to the artist.

You have to ride out there on a donkey from Mena. It is not wise to lose your donkey-boy at the fair, as I did, for your saddle may come to pieces half-way back, as mine did.

Great was the fall therefrom ; I left the ass and his property—I had a train to catch—and walked back into Mena, where I reported the occurrence to the Sheikh, who took the donkey-boy's fare, and made dignified apologies to me for the insecurity of the saddle and the inattentiveness of the boy in not being visible when I wanted to start. I was not to trouble my mind about the boy; the donkey would be sure to find him.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Old Arab Streets of Cairo

WEST of Suez no city has more interesting streets than Cairo. They are as distinguished by mediæval buildings as Venice, mosques taking the place of palaces, and they are full of the coloured life of Africa. In Kyoto, of course, every house is Oriental and the temples are very ancient, though mostly isolated in gardens. In Tokyo the great temples of Shiba, Ueno and Asakusa are in parks on the outskirts, nor is Buddhist architecture as noble as Saracenic. It is to India that one must go for buildings which are more sublime, with a population which is more Oriental.

Even the Street of the Camel, the Piccadilly of Cairo, is gay with native life. I have elsewhere described its picturesque parasites, who make a living out of selling Oriental trash to glorified American shopkeepers, the herdsmen herding, the porters carrying cart-loads, the *bedawin* villages on the march, the buses without roofs or sides, which carry dumpy native women like carboys on their floors. The Street of the Camel is also a favourite one for the pageants of pilgrims returning from Mecca, for weddings, and for funerals, diversified occasionally by the rapid passage of the Khedive to the railway station from his chief palace on the Abdin Square. Here, too, the charging white horses of the *arabeah*, and the Sheikhs pattering along on white saddled asses are most in evidence.

Here the Ismailiya quarter, the Parisian part of Cairo, ends at the Esbekiya Garden. It has not a single Arab building

of any importance except the new offices of the Wakfs (the sort of Ecclesiastical Commissioners who administer the revenues of the mosques) and the villas of the French Consul-General and one or two others in the ancient style. To the Maison de France I shall return; the other great foreign buildings of Cairo are distinguished by their unsuitability to the climate and the landscape.

Few of them have verandas, in a land which has an almost tropical sun; very few make the slightest attempts at Arab arts and graces. Most of them are as ugly as the Hôtel Ritz in Piccadilly, and as ill-adapted for their purpose as the Parisian boulevards, and the London finance offices, which they copy, would be, if transferred bodily to Cairo. Yet though the buildings individually are ugly and unsuitable, their size and costliness give an effect of magnificence to the principal cosmopolitan streets of Cairo. It does look like a great European capital.

I would much rather it looked like a great Oriental capital, an effect not difficult to secure in a land where plasterwork has been carried to such a high pitch of perfection, and where it happens to be correct for the style of architecture. The right style of architecture is obvious—the mamluke house, which does not require isolation or semi-isolation, but looks best in streets. Its tiers of oriel windows are good for window-seats and pleasing to the foreign eye; and the fixed *meshrebiya* work could be replaced by *meshrebiya* lattices, which would be strikingly beautiful and ornamental.

For really native streets one has to go to the quarters round the Citadel, or the quarters round the river ports of old Cairo and Bûlak, though there are pleasant Pashas' villas on the Chûbra road.

There is nothing to be seen at Bûlak which cannot be better seen in the bazars, except that some cafés still have their *mastabas* and that there are a few old mosques. The long native street of old Cairo is a good one. It is low, and therefore suitable for photography; it is broken by an occasional minaret; its shops are thoroughly native and in a state of tumble-down picturesqueness; and its half-rural

half-river population is engaged in many occupations which are unfamiliar to the European eye, and prizes to the kodaker. It is a great advantage that the poor Egyptian should not mind being kodaked, though he likes to make money out of it when he can. There is the shipbuilding-yard, for instance, where Nile boats are built of rough pieces of wood not much bigger than bricks, nailed together, and the shipbuilders do their sawing and so on by the upside-down methods of the Orient. Apart from its unspoiled Arab life and buildings, old Cairo has a superlative interest in its magnificent old Coptic churches, its Roman ruins, its proximity to the most ancient mosque in Cairo, and its place in history from the date when it was founded as the river outpost of ancient Heliopolis, to the dates when its Arab conquerors founded their first capital at Fustat, and three centuries later burnt it to prevent it becoming a prize to the Crusaders.

There is an Arab quarter with a very holy mosque, that of Seyyida Zeynab, on the road from old Cairo to the Citadel. But it is not rich in old buildings. For them one must wait till one gets to Katai, the quarter round the mosques of Ibn Tulun and Kait Bey, the Gamamise and the Hilmiya, and the quarter of the bazars and its vicinity. All the great mosques lie there: all the mameluke houses are there; there the bulk of the Cairo Arabs live and perform the amusing operations of their every-day existence. There we have streets and streets of the undiluted Orient: this is where Cairo is an unspoiled Arab City of the Middle Ages, with stately dwelling streets of lofty houses still spell-bound in dignity and calm, and with covered *sûks* seething with the life of natives at work and shopping.

This part of Cairo is one of the most delightful places I ever was in: for three months I went to it nearly every day, attended by Ali, an English-speaking Arab of the *Sûks*, who pointed out little bits of life to me, and took me into all sorts of native buildings and institutions, which I should never have had the impudence to enter alone.

This is the Cairo where water-sellers take the place of

public-houses; where half the population is sitting down, waiting for Allah to provide business for it, and the other half is blundering along like a buffalo, doing a buffalo's work, or enjoying Egypt's climate and Egypt's sugar-cane in idleness.

This part of the town abounds in ancient buildings, whose exteriors have never been spoiled by restorations; its bazar life alone is a matter of never-ending interest and oddness to the intelligent tourist; there he may soak himself in Saracenic art.

To return to the *Maison de France*. In the days of the Khedive Ismail, an enterprising Frenchman, named M. de Saint-Maurice, wanted some concession from the Khedive. To secure it he hit upon the idea of building out of the most ancient and beautiful materials a noble Arab mansion and presenting it to the Khedive, who would not have liked it half as much as a European barrack or a palace in the worst German princeling's style.

In those days there was no prejudice against pulling down old mosques and old mameluke houses to sell their painted ceilings and *meshrebiya* screens, their marble fountains, and old Persian tiles, to French art dealers. So M. de Saint-Maurice had plenty of superb materials to hand, and produced an Arab mansion which has been the envy of collectors ever since. The Khedive did not come forward in the manner that was expected of him, and the mansion never became his, but passed through various hands to the French Republic, who have made it the official residence of their Consul-General in Egypt.

The *Maison de France* stands in the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil. It is a sort of a cross between an Egyptian mosque of the Kait Bey epoch and Lord Leighton's house in Kensington. The Arab "fakes" of Lord Leighton's house are executed with more knowledge and good taste, but M. de Saint-Maurice had far better chances than Lord Leighton, and made excellent use of them in the acquisition of materials. In the palmy days of Ismail Pasha a Frenchman with influence in Cairo could strip mosque after mosque, mansion after mansion of its mediæval decorations. The *Maison de France* reminds

one of a mosque in many ways—for example, in its porch, in its portal, which has a glorious bronze door taken from a mosque, and in its Hall of Fêtes. Directly you get inside you see a charming fountain at the head of the staircase, but the two *tours de force* of the house are the Hall of Fêtes and the Hanging Garden. The former is perfectly delightful; it is built in the form of a fifteenth-century mosque, with a floor of tessellated marble, sunk in the centre under a cupola. The *liwân* and the other recesses have deep soft carpets and cushions; the walls have a panelling of rare old marbles taken from mosques, the antique painted timber roof, as I was told, has actually done duty in a mosque. At every point where it could be applied, there is a lavish display of splendid old *meshrebiya* work. The cornice is covered with old Arabic decorations; the ivory inlaid doors were made from mosque pulpits; there are windows of plâtre ajouré, gemmed with old stained glass, old mosque lamps a-swing from long chains, the pendentives, which are the chief grace of Arab architecture, old Arabic inscriptions of exquisite lettering; the inlaying of ivory and mother-of-pearl, and antique Persian tiles, are used with delightful effect. The music gallery, high up at one end, is not well done when you examine it closely, but it has a good effect from below, and is the best point for examining the beautiful old fifteenth-century roof. Once upon a time the Minister gave a fancy-dress ball in this hall, with musicians in the gallery above. It is finer than the upper hall of the Zisa itself; it has all the picturesque little appurtenances of an Arab mansion, such as the arched sort of altar called the Suffeh, on which the water pitchers stand.

As charming in its way as the hall is the Hanging Garden, with its tall palms and its sunk Arab fountain, and its lovely gallery of old *meshrebiya*, and panels of old plaster work and old tiles let into the walls. Everything, to the flying gallery round the top, is charming.

The fault of this house is that where old Arabic materials are not used, there is no attempt to make the modern work worthy of them. Some of it is very vulgar and poor. It would pay the French Republic to take the house down and

re-erect it on the banks of the Nile, with the modern portion made worthy of the exquisite old Arabic materials. The price they would get for the site of the house and garden in the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil would pay for the new site, and the taking down and rebuilding, and leave a very large surplus. A business quarter has grown up round its present position.

The chief streets of the Citadel quarter for architecture are the Gamaliya, the Sûk-es-Nahassin, the Sûk-es-Zalat, the Sharia Emir-el-Giyûchi, the Sharia Khordagiya, the Sharia el-Akkadin, the Sharia el-Menaggadin, the Sukkariya, the Sharia Kasabat-Radowan, the Sharia el-Magharbelin, the Sharia el-Serugiya, the Sharia el-Merdani, the Haret-el-Merdani, the Sharia Darb-el-Ahmah, the Sharia Bab-el-Wazir, the Sharia el-Magar, the Sharia Sûk-es-Sullah, and the Sharia Gama-mise.

What are the characteristics; what is the kodaker and sightseer to look for in one of these Arab streets? Mosques, schools, fountains, baths, old palaces, *khans*, *sûks*, oil-mills, Dervish *tekkes*, and people engaged in the common round and trivial tasks of native life.

A good street to begin with is the Sûk-es-Zalat, which becomes the Sharia el-Emir-el-Giyûchi, and can be approached from the Esbekiya at the back of the Bristol Hotel by the street known as Little Sicily, or from the railway station by the highly picturesque Sharia Bab-el-Bahr. The latter is preferable unless you have a desire to explore the Fishmarket. Several times had I cast hungry eyes on the Sharia Bab-el-Bahr before I explored it, when I had seen pilgrims or marriage processions disappear between its beetling houses and shops of strange wares.

When I went down it I was a little disappointed. It was only semi-Arab till it reached the first of the two *sûks*, but the Sûk-es-Zalat is a typical native street with all the points. A shower of rain converts it into a red sea of mud. It is bordered with humble shops under, and in between, fine old mameluke mansions, and it has old mosques and baths and oil-mills. There are brass-workers here who do a little



dealing in old brass. I have bought choice pieces here. But the charm of the street lies in its beautiful buildings, hardly important enough to be monuments, and in its placid native life. The artist finds some of his choicest bits here. There is one old mameluke house with three long tiers of *mesh-rebiya'd* oriels facing the street and a graciously arabesqued courtyard; another, in which the hand of the destroyer has torn down one side-wall of the court, revealing screens and ceilings of woodwork which no other house in Cairo can boast. There is a bath with marble-panelled chambers and marble fountains and arches, which would have done for a Caliph of the Middle Ages; and an old oil-mill with pointed arches which ought to have belonged to Westminster Abbey.

The mosques are not on the grand scale, but they have mellowed out of the perpendicular with age, and their façades are graciously arabesqued and their courts old and romantic. There is hardly anything in the street thought worthy of mention by Baedeker or Murray, yet it is all paintable from end to end.

The Haret-el-Merdani behind the great Merdani mosque, has a couple of splendid old mansions; the adjoining road, leading down to the Sûk of the Armourers, has several, but both of them are too native to have any life in the streets. The houses mostly belong to Arabs of the old school, who keep their front doors shut and locked, whereas Cairo generally, in the security of the British Occupation, leaves its courts open to the passer-by. I speak from experience: under Ali's audacious escort I tried to get into every courtyard that gave hopes of having any architectural pretensions. Streets like these are not easy to find, for commerce has intruded into most of the streets which are rich in old buildings, and the courtyards are the first things which are turned into business premises. The Gamaliya is an example of this; few streets in Cairo are so rich in old buildings, but hardly one of them is a private mansion any longer.

The mameluke houses may be taken as the type of the best Arab mansions in Cairo. I only know one foreigner who has had the sense to take one and do it up in the old style.

It makes one of the most fascinating pleasure-houses that man could devise. The only points against them are that few of them have gardens now, and that they are generally undetached on either side. To the street they present a high wall with a door, strong enough for a castle, in a richly decorated archway, the only opening on the ground floor. Over this there is a row of corbels or brackets to allow the first floor to project a couple of feet in the style of our sixteenth-century houses in England, and the rows of oriel windows in the upper floors carry the harem women another two feet over the street, to let them see all that they saw of the world in the old days. The windows are closely screened with *meshrebiya* work ; but it is easy to see out through this woodwork net, and many of them have a little wicket that can be lifted up, though Arab damsels do not throw roses to serenaders, like the daughters of Sicily. The exterior of one of these mansions, with its triple row of oriels, is very picturesque, especially in a street like the Gamaliya, where it is set off by mosques and porches and fountains, each more picturesque than the other. If the door is open and you peep through, the odds are that you will see nothing. The entrance passage winds, with the object of concealing from the street what is going on in the courtyard. The first chamber which you enter is the porter's room, with *mastabas* round it for the servants. Off the courtyard also opens the *mandar'ah* or reception-room, which generally has a sunken marble floor where you enter and a dais at the back with the large cushions, which are called *divans*, for seats. If the visitor is of sufficient distinction for the master of the house to invite him on to the dais he leaves his shoes on the marble floor, which is called the *durka'ah*. If the house is grand enough the *durka'ah* will be charmingly paved with black and white marble and little pieces of fine red tile, and may have in its centre one of the little fountains called *faskiya*, playing into a small shallow pool lined with coloured marbles like the floor. There is generally, close by the door, a *suffeh*, which looks like an arched Gothic altar, made of stone or marble, about four feet high, containing the washing-vessels, pitchers

of water and so on, while the pipes and coffee-sets and water-bottles are placed above. The dais in this room, like the dais in a mosque, is called the *luwân*, the ceiling is of wood decorated with arabesques in overlays of hard wood, or gaily painted. There are at least two other places where the master of the house may receive a visitor—the *takhtabosh* and the *mak'ad*, the latter often being on the top of the former. The *takhtabosh* is one of the most charming features in the courtyard: if the house is handsome the stone-work all round the court may be carved with arabesques, but the best decoration is reserved for the *takhtabosh*, which is a recess with a fine wooden ceiling supported in front by a single column and with a *mastaba* of carved wood running round its walls to sit on.

The *mak'ad* is one of the most beautiful features of these beautiful courtyards, consisting as it does of a lofty room, separated from the court by from two to five tall stilted arches carried almost as high as the roof. It frequently has also one or more *meshrebiya* pavilions projecting over the courtyard, from which the harem ladies can satisfy their curiosity without being seen. *Mak'ads* generally have richly decorated ceilings, and often have their walls painted with views of Mecca. Some houses, like that of Sultan Beybars, have in addition on the ground floor (besides the usual domestic offices) a superb Hall of Fêtes, very large and high, in the style of the Hall of the Fêtes of the Harem. This is a magnificent chamber, carried up as high as the roof, having a cupola in the centre like a mosque, with a sunken floor below it inlaid with tessellated marbles and sometimes containing a fountain. This chamber is called the *ka'ah*, and has generally a *suffeh* like the *mandar'ah* below. A *ka'ah* like that of the house called Gamel-ed-din in the Hoche Kadam is as fine as a mosque. It is lined all round with cupboards of hardwood inlaid like a mosque pulpit, and decorated at irregular intervals and elevations with arched recesses to hold china. The walls above are inlaid with precious marbles or beautiful old blue tiles; its ceiling, laid on massive beams, is richly carved and painted; the cupola rests on angles cut away into clusters of

the pendentives, so characteristic of the best period of Saracen art, and the broad daïs at each end and the narrow daïs at each side of the sunken marble *durka'ah*, are divided off from it by bold moresque arches. The carpets and divans are very rich, but there is hardly any furniture except a few of the octagonal brass tables or stools called *kursi*, which are exquisitely chased and often inlaid with silver.

Where the pottery on the shelves is noble Oriental lustreware, and the walls are richly inlaid, and the colouring on the ceiling is three or four hundred years old, the effect is indescribably rich, especially if there are long ranges, high up on the walls, of the windows called *kamariya*, which consist of little pieces of richly coloured glass set in panels of pierced plaster, taking the shape of arabesques or flowers, or even a phoenix, to throw on the floor a coloured reflection when the sun shines through them.

There is one respect in which the reception halls of a Cairo palace are distinctly less appropriate than a Tunisian palace. The Moors of Tunis prefer vaulted ceilings rich in pendentives, which they cover with exquisite plâtre ajouré, the fretted plaster-work so much used in the Alhambra at Granada, the most elegant decoration in Arabic architecture.

Nearly the whole of the upper portion of the house is given up to the harem; the rows of *meshrebiya* windows looking over the street are for the amusement of its inmates, and to relieve them in the heat of summer. Because these windows, except where European ideas have crept in, contain no glass, there is such a draught through them that water-vessels stand in them to cool, and this gives them their name. The sun hardly penetrates them.

There is another feature in which the old-fashioned Cairo mansion differs from the Tunisian, which has an elaborate chief bedroom for its master. In the mameluke houses they have no proper bedrooms in our sense of the word. Any room which is not being used for anything else serves, the bed consisting only of a few cushions, a pillow, and a padded blanket, which can be rolled up in the daytime and put in the sort of cupboard called the *khasna*, which in winter is itself used for

sleeping in for the sake of warmth. For these Cairo houses, with no glass in their windows, can be deadly cold on account of their draughts and the prevalence of marble and plaster floors. Where the floors are made of wood they are covered with plaster.

Here, as in Italy, the summer is the enemy, not the winter. All provisions are made against heat, the principal being a kind of screen of boards called a *mallhaf*, made to meet the north wind and force it down into the *feshah*, or some other apartment underneath it on the same principle as the ventilating funnels of a steamer. To warm themselves they use nothing but charcoal braziers, often of very fine and artistic patterns. I wanted to buy them and bring them home whenever I saw them, but was deterred by the cost of transporting such a heavy and cumbrous thing. They look like mosque domes standing on three legs.

The poor people have a much better idea of warming themselves, though their houses are very poor, made of mud, one or two stories high. Even they often have enough room to keep up the harem idea. Being made of mud, it is only the site of the house which can present any serious expense. The poor Egyptians' idea of warming themselves is to build an oven right across the innermost room at its far end and to sleep on the top: the thick mud of which it is made prevents them from being burnt. Sometimes the whole family sleep on the top, sometimes the father and mother make the children sleep on the floor. They probably sleep right against the oven, the sweet little cherub who sits up aloft takes special care of poor Egyptians. These poor people's houses I speak of are perhaps more characteristic of Upper Egypt, for in Cairo the *raba* system prevails. The *raba* is a tenement consisting of one or two sitting- and sleeping-rooms, a kitchen and a latrine. It must be remembered that both sexes, except the wealthy people, who have a Turkish bath in their own house, go to public baths constantly. These *rabas* are built over the shops in the poorer streets. They are easy to recognise from outside, because they are generally built at an angle to the street—that is to say, instead of there being a flat wall with a window

in the middle over the shop there is a sort of street corner over it with windows looking both ways. As the women pass most of their time indoors they spend an inordinate time at their windows, grated with *meshrebiya* like those of better-off people. By having this succession of angles the occupant of each *raba* can look up and down the street. Streets of *rabas* are nearly the ugliest things in the world, but to their inhabitants they present the same attractions as the oriel'd palaces of the mamelukes.

One thing they do miss, not having a wooden lock to their door. The Egyptian woman loves the idiotic wooden lock of her ancestress in the days of the Pharaohs, and she loves to carry about with her a wooden key almost as long as her baby. It may be literally nearly a foot long, and two inches wide, with a few iron pins like the nails round which piano strings are strained, stuck in one end. When this is put into the lock, the pins which keep the wooden bolt in its place are raised, and it can be drawn back. The lock consists practically of the bolt and a transverse piece of wood, which makes it look like a Chinese puzzle in the form of a cross. The wooden bolt of a street door lock is about fourteen inches long; rooms and cupboards have small ones, not more than seven or eight or nine inches long, but the lock of the door which closes the courtyard will be more likely two feet long, and if it is a very fine house or a public building it may be any length. Lane remarks that it is not difficult to pick this kind of lock—it is a fatuous survival of the Middle Ages.

## CHAPTER XIV

### The Characteristics of the Gamia or Egyptian Mosque

THERE is no happier man in Cairo than the intelligent tourist with a passion for old Arab architecture, who can throw the same zest into hunting for prize mosques as others throw into hunting for bargains in the bazars. For Cairo is full of ancient mosques, great and small, ruined and perfect, each with some gem of beauty. I have been into nearly all of them, for Ali, my dragoman, knew that the easiest way to keep me employing him was to find antique mosques and palaces which had escaped my observation, and, unless I was tied for time, I never passed either without trying to get into them. It was not always possible to find out their names. If a mosque has fallen into ruin and disuse, its nearest neighbours soon forget its name. They take no interest in its architecture, however beautiful. If it is very enormous, they may be proud of its size, but in the main they regard a mosque as a place to use, and when it is no longer in use, it ceases to exist for them. And, unfortunately, mosques which are not in use are generally very difficult to get into, I suppose for fear of their decorations being stolen.

What are the characteristics of the far-famed mosques of Cairo? The oldest are mere cloisters with open colonnades, the eastern colonnade being deepened into a hall. In the later mosques the central court is roofed over by a cupola, making the whole building closed instead of open.

The idea of a mosque is delightfully simple and rational ;

in its simplest form it is merely a bit of the desert walled in from intruders. You have it in its simplest form in the mosque of the Mahdi and the Khalifa at Omdurman; now used as a drill ground. The next step was to give the worshippers shelter from the merciless sun of Egypt. Instead of a mere enclosure the mosque became a courtyard surrounded by colonnades or apses, the eastern recess being so deepened as to afford shelter wherever the sun might be. This made the building cruciform, the long arm of the cross being its head and the other arms frequently being quite shallow.

When the fashion set in of attaching schools or universities to mosques, the scholastic buildings were erected in the angles of the cross and sometimes all round them. The mosque of Sultan Hassan, the premier mosque of Islam, is even in its ruin an excellent example of this. It belongs to the order of mosques which have their courtyards surrounded by four great arches with apses or shallow chambers behind; the Barkukiya and the tomb mosque of Sultan Kalaûn are other notable examples of this style of architecture. But most of the great old mosques, especially the larger ones, were surrounded by colonnades instead of single arches. There was an obvious reason for this: only the very finest buildings could be given arches of such tremendous span. The arches of Sultan Hassan's mosque are almost as large as the arches of St. Peter's or the Basilica of Constantine at Rome.

The other type of *medresa*, or college-mosque, which replaces these gigantic arches by long colonnades is, as a rule, far more beautiful. There are many examples of that in Cairo, El-Azhar (but its colonnade is modern and vulgar), the mosques of El-Moayyad, El-Merdani, Ibn Tulun, Amr, and El-Mas, and the Blue Mosque are sufficient to cite, for they are the glory of Cairo. Sometimes the sanctuary, which is generally two and a half or five times as deep as the northern, western, and southern colonnades, is separated from the courtyards by a vast oaken screen as at El-Moayyad. Sometimes it has a balustrade, as at the Blue Mosque or



El-Mas. The worshippers frequently use the other colonnades as well as the sanctuary, which is called the *liwân*. In the *medresa*, with arched courtyards, the *liwân* (sanctuary) is a deep hall open to the west. In the other type of *medresa* this hall is sometimes divided into aisles by a forest of columns supporting arches, which may or may not have cross arches. The mosque of Amr, the oldest of all in its foundation, is a good example of this, though its present buildings belong to a late restoration. Where there are no cross arches, wooden rafters stretched from column to column may take their place, as at the mosque of Amr. They were used of course for suspending the crystal lamps, which are now, if of fine workmanship and in good condition, worth a thousand pounds apiece. One mosque formerly had eighteen thousand of them. The few survivors are the pride of the Arab museum of Cairo. Hundreds of chains for suspending them still hang from the roof of Sultan Hassan's *liwân*.

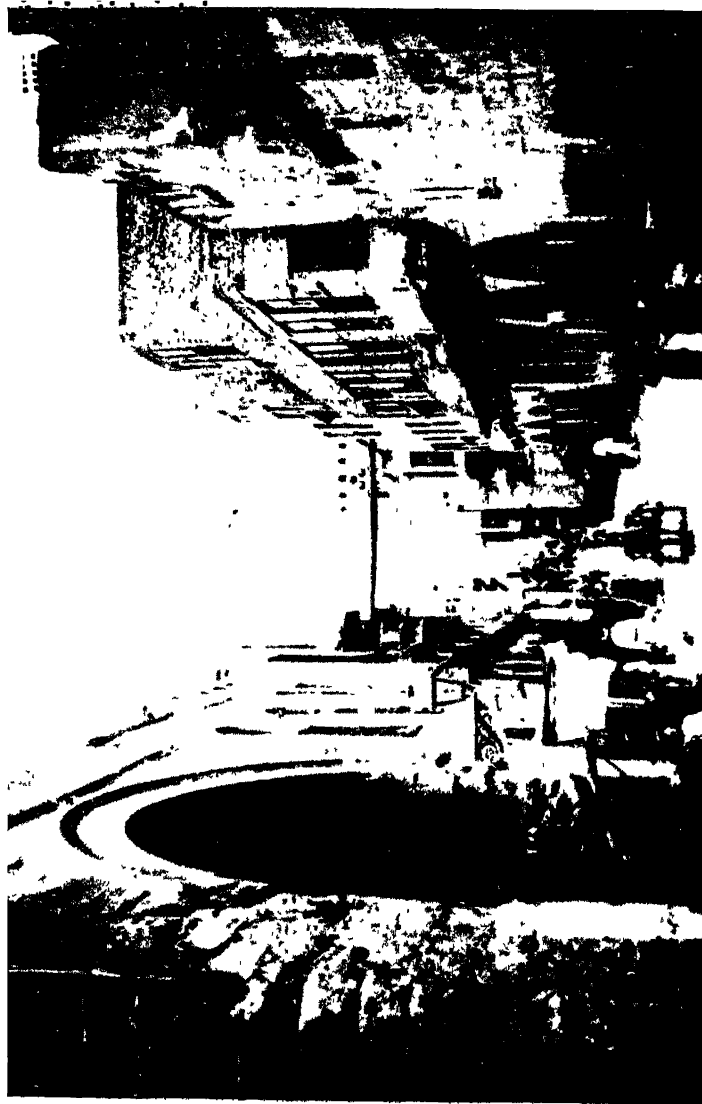
In the east wall of every *liwân* near its centre is the *mihrab*, the empty recess sometimes called the *kiblah*, because it marks the direction of Mecca; and near it is the *mimbar* or pulpit. The *mihrab*, which is a little apse about the height of a door, often has a text from the Koran in the beautiful Arabic writing round it. Sometimes it is quite plain, but it is generally decorated either with mosaics, or with the plaster carvings in which the Arabs delight, or with tessellated marbles. The introduction of mother-of-pearl into the mosaics, and tiny engaged columns of turquoise-blue faience are constant features. In the miniature arcading used as a decoration the trefoil-headed fourteenth-century arch employed is almost exactly like our trefoil-headed arch of the period.

The *mimbar* is a curious-looking affair. It consists of a very narrow steep stair leading up to a canopy only just wide enough to contain the preacher, and generally surmounted by a large ball. The space between the staircase and the floor is always filled in with panels of hard, dark wood, generally inlaid with ivory, or mother-of-pearl. The balustrade itself is

Finally, I may mention that, with the exception of three, all the Cairo mosques are open to Christians who choose to pay two piastres (about fivepence) for a mosque ticket. But visitors are required either to take off their shoes or put on overshoes, to prevent them from making the floor unclean.



THE HEART OF CAIRO.



A MEDIEVAL STREET IN THE ARAB CITY AT CAIRO

## CHAPTER XV

### The Mosques of Cairo

I SUPPOSE that in India there may be a class of buildings comparable to the noble order of mosques at Cairo. Elsewhere there cannot be. No city in Japan or China can match it either in the number or the size or the material of its temples. There is nothing in Europe to compare to it except the churches of Rome.

What are the features or elements which make the mosques of Cairo so world-famous and so irresistible? They are charming alike in form and colour and decoration; they have the distinction of age—even up to a thousand years; they have often the tenderness of ruin and decay, the romance of solitude and desolation. They are historical too, some of them, and all have the true atmosphere of religion conferred on them by the simplicity and sincerity of their worshippers.

Before I went to Egypt I had a conviction that the Saracenic architecture of Cairo would appeal to me more than the architecture of the Pharaohs, that the mosques of Saladin would give me more pleasure than the temples of Rameses II., and I was not mistaken; for the former are romantic and the latter have the severity of the Old Testament.

There are at least a hundred of the 264 mosques and 225 shrines in Cairo with some grace that arrests the eye. All of them I know by sight, though I do not know all of their names. Most of the great mosques are within a few minutes' walk of the Citadel. There are few with any graces a mile away from it, and those few, with I think but one exception,

are in the port of Cairo, Bûlak, with one or two in Roda Island and in old Cairo ; the Bûlak mosques especially are very old.

The exception is the oldest of all, the mosque of Amr in the destroyed quarter of Fustat.

I commenced my pilgrimages to mosques on my very first day in Cairo. A friend, the Major Fletcher who has illustrated three of my books, and who had been in Egypt before, took us down the Musky and along the Sûk-en-Nahassin. In these two streets I saw two of the most lovable types of mosques, the little old mosques frequented by the people, and the royal mosques of the Early Middle Ages.

At the very corner of the Musky and the crowded Khor-dagiya which runs past the Turkish Bazar, is the old, old Motahhar mosque.

It may chance to be not so old as it looks, but no mosque could look more venerable. It has a charming minaret and overhangs the street with brown Saracen masonry fantastic and decayed. There is another near, a mere *sawia* or shrine, half-boarded up, and with its roof fallen in, whose fabric and masonry are as beautiful as precious stones. The first mosque has a long narrow courtyard of unusual shape crowded at most times with the picturesque poor.

We did not linger over those : our friend was so breathless to hurry us on to the three great mosques of the Sûk-en-Nahassin.

The Sûk-en-Nahassin is to me the most beautiful street I was ever in ; look whichever way I would, my view was bounded by objects, which were a dream of beauty, a dream of the Middle Ages. It is not like a street but a piazza, for its ends seem blocked, one by a sudden bend, one by the most adorable *sebil* in Cairo.

A *sebil* is a fountain-house, whose boldly curved sides are guarded with grills of exquisite metal-work, and whose upper story is graciously arcaded for air and curtained from the sun, to accommodate one of the *kuttabs*, where little children receive their first lessons in the Koran. There are many *sebils* in Cairo, so beautiful that they almost rank

with mosques as examples of the architectural grace of the Saracens. This one depends neither upon its architecture nor its decorations, so much as upon its incomparable position between two little old streets at the rising end of the Sûk-en-Nahassin. At the same time it is "just right," in the language of artists and kodakers, who never fail to carry away a picture of it.

In the centre of the more important side of this wonderful street is a group of three royal mosques, which with the old buildings attached to them, make up one of the most beautiful masses of architecture in the world ; the mosque of Sultan Kalaûn, the mosque of Sultan en-Nasir, and the mosque of Sultan Barkûk are joined together as closely as the nave and transept and choir of a cathedral ; and built on to them are the *mârîstan* or hospital of Sultan Kalaûn and the Sheikh's house of En-Nahassin, which artists love. This is not as old as the rest, but its superb *meshrebiya* window and graceful portal make it worthy to come into the picture. Into the picture, from the front, the *mârîstan* hardly enters except for its high dark portal between the mosque and the tomb of Sultan Kalaûn, and the interior of the mosque is neglected for the splendours of the tomb. The façade of the three mosques has the beauty of a Gothic cathedral, with the fantastic grace of the Orient added in porch and minaret. There is one bit of true Gothic in it, the portal of the church of St. John at Acre in Palestine, carried off as a trophy from the Crusaders at the capture of the city. Its clustered and receding columns are not out of harmony with the rest, for the mosque windows with their pairs of delicate arches under a rose-window, "contained" in arched recesses, have caught the spirit of the Lombard and imprisoned it in hoary Saracen masonry crowned with its own flower-like battlements. The noble minaret of the Kalaûn mosque is eclipsed by the beauty of its neighbour, the minaret of the mosque of Mohammed-en-Nasir, for there is none in Cairo to be compared with En-Nasir's for the delicate lace-work into which every inch of its walls are carved, and the flowing pendentives which support its balconies.

The Barkûkiya is in absolute contrast to the other two mosques: the impression you derive from its courtyard is one of plain majesty from the loftiness and simplicity of its four great arches. Inside it is handsome rather than exquisite; everything is rich but nothing is very lovable.

Of the interiors Sultan Kalaûn's comes first. Not only is the *mûristan* full of the unspoiled if ruinous architecture of an Arab hospital of the thirteenth century: not only have we the little-altered court and *liwân* of a thirteenth-century mosque; but in the tomb-chamber we have a mortuary shrine only surpassed in India. Its richness and elegance are marvellous. Its mighty windows of white fretwork, its mighty screens of carved wood, its walls inlaid with precious marbles, and its stately tomb make a feast for the eye not to be matched even in Cairo. And its windows are filled with cunningly coloured glass which throw rich lights across the shadowy splendour.

En-Nasir's mosque is little more than a shell. Its back is in ruins; its finest window is cut off by an open space, where the workers in copper and brass who give the *sûk* its name hammer and chase the rose and golden metals into forms so quaint that they might be for the service of the mosques, if one did not see them carried outside to the bazar as they are finished. That window of En-Nasir might have belonged to the lady-chapel of Fair Rosamond's nunnery.

The Barkûkiya as it is called—the mosque of Sultan Barkûk—though it blends so truly with the others, was not built till they had been standing for a century, and inside it has little in common with them; but it gives us unspoiled the type of the fifteenth-century mosque before mosque-building lost all its old forms in the hands of Kait Bey, though already the *liwân* was a deep chamber and no longer the deepened side of a colonnade. In the lofty *liwân* of the Barkûkiya, which on its western side is only severed from the court and sky by three stilted arches with vast old granite monoliths, all the details are fine, but none of them except the bronze doors and the ivory-inlaid reading desk are inspired.

The side of the Sûk-en-Nahassîn facing the royal mosques



is to the unthinking so cumbered with ruins as to have no meaning. But to those who stop to think it has a peculiar fascination; for here are the mighty remains of mosque and mansion and Caliph's palace held together by the lowly line of shops, which burrow into their ruined façades and are tenanted by sellers of brass sherbet cups and Arab grocers, with here and there a fat-tailed sheep, tethered against the shop front to be fed up for the sacrifice.

At the end where the *sûk* approaches the Turkish Bazar are the vaults where the great brass water-vessels are sold, noble in their forms but neglected by tourists as too large to carry away; at the far end are the pipe-sellers. The street is always full of native hucksters and carters, biblically primitive and the passing quick and dead.

You cannot spend a morning there without seeing a funeral because the *sûk* lies on the way from certain crowded quarters to the vast cemetery outside the Bab-en-Nasr.<sup>1</sup>

Mohammedan funerals were most impressive to me. Here was the oldest form of procession, nearly primitive in its simplicity. The body was still borne upon a wooden bier covered only by a shawl. The bearers were often changed, so that more might have merit. Its approach was heralded by the wail of the hired mourners and the chanting of the Koran by the *fikees*. The Koran was borne on a cushion before it; there might be a few Dervish banners; the bereaved women would have a film of blue muslin round their heads. The men would have no sign of mourning but dejection or tears. The Koran forbids all mourning for those who are freed from the hardships and perils of life. But human nature in the fourteen centuries since the coming of the Prophet has established the prescriptive right to mourn where the heart bleeds. As there was no dress of mourning, the processions were not lacking in colour; their tenderness and dignity were remarkable, and they connected us with the ancient world in the most ancient way, as we saw that high-horned richly-palld bier carried on the shoulders of the mourners to lay the dust of humanity in the dust of the desert.

<sup>1</sup> The mosque is En-Nasir, the gate is En-Nasr.

The mosques of the Sûk-en-Nahassin are not typical mosques for studying the beauty of Mohammedan holiness : they have not the spaciousness and retirement ; they have not the beauty of solitude. Therefore I have not described the general aspect and conditions of a Cairo mosque interior. These are better to be seen in mosques like El-Moayyad or El-Merdani, El-Mase, or El-Ghury, as I shall show, while I am taking my readers through the principal streets for mosques.

The Gamaliya is, contrary to what one would expect of such a noble architectural thoroughfare, not a good street for mosques ; it has only one great antique mosque which is not in ruins and that has lost its ancient features. But the whole long street extending from the Musky to the Bab-es-Zuweyla, and called in various parts the Sharia el-Ashrafiya, the Sharia el-Ghuriya, the Sharia el-Akkadin and the Sukkariya is full of stately mosques and so is the long winding street which leads from the Bab-es-Zuweyla to the Citadel. The former contains El-Ghury, El-Moayyad, El-Ashrafy, and others of the finest mosques in Cairo ; the latter contains the Kismas El-Ishaky mosque, El-Merdani, the Sha'ban Mosque, the Blue Mosque, and others of note and magnificence, and a whole row of perfectly delightful little *sawias*.

El-Moayyad and El-Merdani are typical as two of the most popular and magnificent of the old mosques of Cairo restored to their ancient splendour ; and it was English influence which effected this. I shall not describe both in detail because they are rather similar, though El-Merdani is much the older and more beautiful, if less handsome. El-Ghury for size and beauty combined is the finest mosque in the city of the Kait Bey type, and I shall have to speak of others of special interest.

I will not say more of El-Ashrafy, the mosque lifted high above the turmoil at the corner of the Ashrafiya and the Musky, a noble mosque in the grace and dignity of its architecture. It is so near El-Ghury, which I shall be taking as a type. I will pass on to the other end of the street to

enter the grand mosque of El-Moayyad, built in 1422, so close to the Bab-es-Zuweyla gate, the centre of ancient Cairo, that its minarets were reared on the two old towers of the gate.

El-Moayyad is as glorious as a cathedral. It is of great size. Its lofty, battlemented walls, designed to rival Sultan Hassan's, and exquisitely decorated in Saracen fashion with sunken panels, run for many feet along the busy thoroughfare of the Sukkariya.

Like Sultan Hassan's mosque, too, it has a noble portal at the head of a marble stairway, and its bronze gates taken from that mosque are the finest in Cairo. The entrance is on the east side close to the founder's tomb, which is under a superb dome, but has no regular tomb-chamber. When I was there last purple-robed professors were addressing little classes all round the tomb. The nobility and dignity of these first chambers is seldom properly appreciated. Every visitor hurries on to the splendid *coup d'œil* formed by the great *liwân*, with its vast and rich screen looking across the glittering courtyard to the garden. Alone of all the mosques of Cairo, El-Moayyad has a garden as large as a London square and planted with gay flowers, soaring palms, and eucalyptus. As a garden, in a land where anything will grow with Eden richness by the free use of water, it would not be worth mentioning were it not that it is the only real garden in a Cairo mosque. Very restful to the eye, against the blaze of marbles.

El-Moayyad, with its open court and garden, is absolutely lovely inside. It is distinguished by the immense screen of massively carved dark wood which runs the entire length of its *liwân*, and by the richness of its decoration; it has a glorious painted roof; the marble panelling and plâtre ajouré and arabesques of its long eastern wall are superb. The *mimbar* is as richly inlaid as an Indian workbox; the *mihrab* stands between glorious antique porphyry columns; the cool marbles of the main columns and *dikka* make a refreshing note; and perhaps the crowning touch is the grand gilt lettering

round the cornices. The stucco tracery of the windows representing cypresses and arabesques is hardly to be matched. The mosque may be a trifle too done up, but it has more of the magnificence of a cathedral than any mosque in Cairo.

As you mount up the winding street which leads from the Bab-es-Zuweyla gate of El-Kahira to the main guard of the Citadel your whole route is full of the colour of Egypt.

Right at the beginning of the street called here the Sharia Derb-el-Ahmah is the entrance to the gay awninged Tent-makers' Bazar, guarded by a tiny ruinous mosque of gay masonry. Passing the brightly coloured wares of the donkey-harness maker you soon come to a mosque built across the street, Kismas-el-Ishaky. It is worth examining, for it was built in the Egyptian Renaissance, the era of Kait Bey, and its restorations are perfect though a little hard and fresh. It is typical alike in its plan and its decorations, a little gem of the fifteenth century. On its left as you ascend the street it is connected with further buildings by the most delightful open woodwork gallery in Cairo.

You pass on, and soon, where the street is renamed Sharia el-Tabbana, you come to a delicious *sebil* of rather an unusual pattern. It looks more like part of a mosque, but the voices of the *kuttab* children intoning the Koran in the arched upper chamber betray it. Its façade has charming old arabesques and inscriptions on its dark masonry, and its fountain chamber is lined with rich old blue tiles.

I used to halt and feast my eyes and meditate there before I passed on to the wholly delectable Merdani mosque, a little lower down the street on the right. The Merdani mosque is one of the most precious relics of the fourteenth century in Cairo. You can see it well; from up or down the street you get its long line of walls built in echelon, surmounted with Saracen battlements, pierced with most picturesque Saracenic windows. Its stone is mellow, its walls are bent with age.

El-Merdani has one special charm. Except El-Azhar itself, it is almost the only mosque you can see into from the

street. If you walk up to its door, your eyes rest on its great white sunny court, surrounded south, west, and north by elegant colonnades in the old Saracen style, while the eastern side is filled up to its stilted arches with a massive screen of carved dark wood, many yards long. In its lofty colonnades, like the aisles of a cathedral, there are always pious men lying prone or sitting on their haunches, reading the Koran.

Behind that glorious screen is a very noble *liwān*, with everything to satisfy the eye. The pulpit is very old, fantastic, and rich; the delightful *mīhrab* is as gay as a jewel of the Pharaohs, with its blue enamel and mother-of-pearl mosaics; there are many beautiful arabesques cut in the mellow stone above the marble panelling of the walls. The carpets are old, and soft, and fine; the *dikka*, standing on twelve pillars, is just like the pulpit of Palermo or Siena, but with carvings instead of a wealth of inlaid marbles; the cupola is supported by granite pillars from an ancient Egyptian temple; and the roof was painted in the fourteenth century, with a stately Arabic inscription running round the cornice below it.

The antique arches of the peristyle are stilted like the Arabo-Norman arches of Palermo and Monreale, and in its centre is the old, old fountain from Sultan Hassan's mosque. Round the entrance doors are richly carved and coloured arabesques. The outside of this mosque is very unspoiled; its moresco windows, divided into twin lights by slender shafts and filled in with pierced marble panels in the old Cairo style, are delightful. They are not required to give much light, as the mosque consists only of court and colonnades.

Exquisite as it is, El-Merdani left me still seeking for the ideal place for solitary worship. It was too superb, too like a temple to invite the simple-hearted.

A little below El-Merdani's mosque, and where the Sharia el-Tabbana becomes the Sharia Bab-el-Wazir, is the Sha'ban mosque, also of the fourteenth century, whose fine architecture, when I entered it last, was obscured with the scaffolding of the restorer. It was this Sha'ban, perhaps, who instituted the

sending of the royal equipage, represented now by the *mahmal*, on the Mecca pilgrimage. At all events, her tomb is much revered by Moslems. Ali, my dragoman, would never pass it without going into the mosque to mutter a prayer. One of the few charming wooden galleries left in Cairo, belonging to a *kuttab*, connects it with the beautiful old Arab mansion, which has a unique *ka'ah*, very dilapidated, lacking in some of the important features, but with splendid *meshrebiya* and the best *kamariya*, high lights of pierced plaster and coloured glass, set like gems, of any room I saw in Cairo.

We saw this room, with its crumbling tessellated pavement of rich marbles, by the courtesy of its owner, an Arab civil servant, who saw us examining the beautiful courtyard of his palace, whose door stood invitingly open. He came down to the handsome recessed and arabesqued doorway of the harem, and said that if we would wait a minute while he warned its inmates to keep out of the way, he would be able to take us over the *ka'ah* of his harem, which foreign artistes always admired. There was a scuffle of slippered feet, and then he called us up to see a noble chamber forty or fifty feet long, with its floor and walls panelled with marble, and those splendid *meshrebiya'd* and *kamariya'd* windows.

Nearly opposite this house is the famous Blue Mosque which the natives call the Mosque of Ibrahim Agha, Ak-Sunkhur, and various other names. Foreigners know it on account of its wonderful blue tiles, and because the caretaker tries to make them give up two mosque tickets if they wish to see the tomb as well. The entire eastern wall of the mosque up to the level of the windows is covered with blue tiles like the interior of the Valideh mosque at Constantinople. Notice the two singularly beautiful cypress-trees of the large panel, the elegant cipollino balustrades of the *liwân* with their charming arabesques in high relief, the pulpit of carved marbles in faded colours, and the delicately carved arcading of the *mihrab*. The *dikka* for reading the Koran is like the pulpit of an unspoiled Arabo-Norman church in Sicily.

Kodakers love the red-and-white arcading of old stilted arches round the irregular court of the great mosque; they

love its little palm-garden round the ancient fountain in the centre. There is a pitiful something about this mosque: it is so unrestored; it has such an air of semi-wild and gentle decay. Next to it, quite in ruins, is a huge and splendid mosque, the Kherbek, which has a picturesque washing-pool, and, in the little bit saved from ruin for use as a mosque, has an original window with soft old glass and a charming old pulpit and *dukka*. The walls are panelled with tessellated marbles like El-Bordeini. If it were restored judiciously it would become an object of great beauty.

From here to the Bab-el-Wazir gate, and from thence to where the Sharia el-Mager ends on the Citadel hill, the whole street on its eastern side is a bewildering succession of beautiful little mosques, with sculptured mameluke domes, and other ancient buildings. There is no better bit in Cairo for an artist who seeks mediæval Oriental effects. The reader must understand that the Sharia Derb-el-Ahmah, the Sharia el-Tabbana, the Sharia Bab-el-Wazir and the Sharia el-Mager are practically one long winding street leading from the Bab-es-Zuweyla to the Citadel.

The walk down the hill past the Mahmudiya and Emir Akhor's mosque to the two vast mosques of Sultan Hassan and the Rifai'ya sect, under the shadow of the mighty Citadel, is quite as beautiful in another way. But though each of these mosques is a gem of colour and form, you do not get the *mêlée* of old Oriental domes and houses, the feast of fantastic curves and mellow masonry, which surrounds the Bab-el-Wazir.

The two grand mosques of the Place Rumeleh are in size and magnificence almost unequalled in Cairo. The El-Rifai'ya mosque, to which I devote a separate chapter in another volume, is a remarkably successful imitation of antique masonry. It is hard to imagine that its gigantic walls, with their sunken matrix-headed panels and their dignified windows, are not coeval with the Sultan Hassan mosque opposite, and an earthquake, by cracking the walls, has completed the likeness. This mosque was to have been much higher, for it was built to be the mausoleum of the reigning

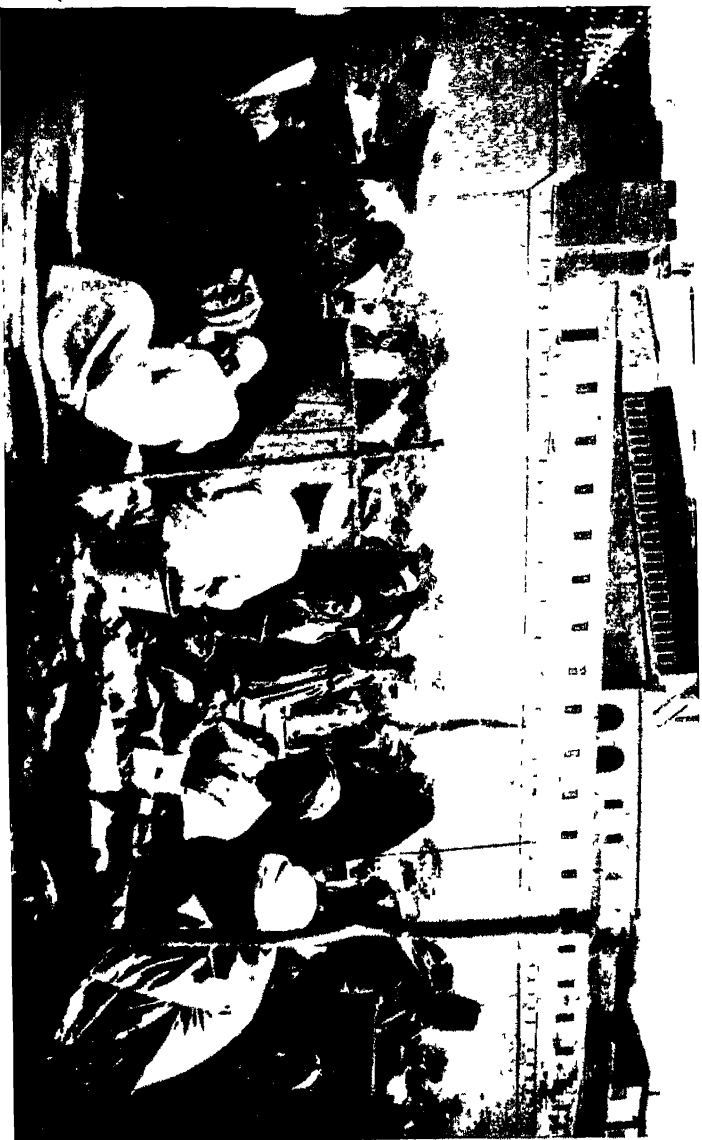
family, but if the plans of the architect had been carried out a very troublesome quarter of the city would have been shielded from the guns of the Citadel. The Khedives have always contemplated the possibility of having to turn the guns of the Citadel on the city for the maintenance of their dynasty.

Napoleon did turn the guns of the Citadel on the Cairenes, and some of his cannon-balls caught, and are still embedded in, the hundred-foot-high wall of the great mosque of Sultan Hassan on the opposite side of the Sharia Mohammed Ali. By many this is regarded as the finest building of the Western Mohammedans. This is reflected in the Arab story about Sultan Hassan having cut off the right hand of the architect so that it might remain the finest building in the world. The story is of course told of various other Arab *chefs d'œuvres*.

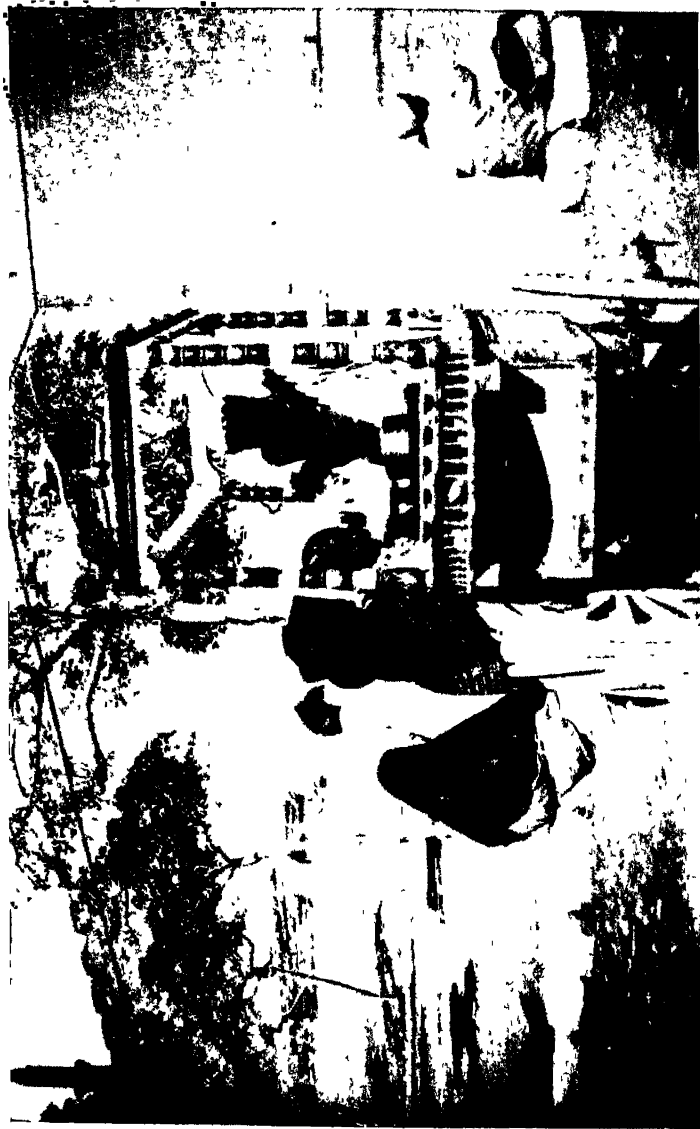
Finished about 1360, this is really one of the noblest mosques in existence. Elsewhere I have compared it to the palace of the Popes at Avignon. It is far more impressive than the Vatican. It covers a vast area; its walls, with their tremendous battlements, are far over a hundred feet high. The portal at which you enter at the top of a sweeping flight of steps with a white marble balustrade is eighty feet high, nearly as high as the arches of St. Peter's, and the head of its sunken panel is decorated with the rich matrix ornament in which the Arabs delight. The same ornament makes the cupola'd hall into which you step dignified and beautiful. The long, cool passage which leads to the mosque proper was doubtless intended to be emblematic of its origin. It was built, like the rest of the mosque, of stone purloined from the Pyramids and has the characteristics of the passages in the Pyramids.

The sanctuary is in the old style, the eastern recess of a courtyard surrounded by four great arches. Though it is only the recess of a single archway it is nearly seventy feet wide, ninety feet deep, and ninety feet high. It is very simple; it owes its beauty to its vast red-and-white arches with a grand Cufic inscription round each arch, to the marble





THE MARKET OF THE AFTERNOON THE RAG AND METAL MARKET OF ARAB CAIRO,  
Held in the Place Mohammed Ali under the ramparts of the Citadel It's here that one picks up the best bargains in old brass



A BARROW RESTAURANT,

With the ramparts of the Citadel behind The Egyptian woman's black silk head-veil is very well shown

panelling of its walls, to the richness of its chased bronze doors.

The courtyard itself is very lovely, with its unrestored tessellated pavement and its ancient fountain in the most picturesque stage of decay. On each side of the four great arches are elegant sunken panels of black and white marble, showing the barred windows of the four great schools of Islam. For Sultan Hassan's mosque was the University of the four sects.<sup>1</sup>

The tomb of the Imam Shafi, the founder of the Shafai Order, is in one of the three mosques which it is difficult for a Christian to enter, and the only one of the three which is a monument of antique art. It is said to have been built by Saladin and has some fine antique features, though much of it is in atrocious taste. The other two forbidden mosques are those of Seyyida Zeyneb and El-Hassanen. The latter is near El-Azhar and is built in a semi-European style with valuable materials and garish effects. You can see all you want to see of it from the door: it is supposed to contain the head of Hoseyn, the son of Ali, who fell at the battle of Kerbela A.D. 680. Hoseyn and Hassan, like their father Ali, are most revered by the Shia or unorthodox Moslems of Persia. Seyyida Zeyneb was their sister; her mosque was only finished in 1803 and is not in the taste which appeals to the artistic, so it can be omitted.

At present, like every part of the mosque, the eight hundred chambers of the University are abandoned, not to the owl and the bat, but to the Italian restorer and the

<sup>1</sup> "Sultan Hassan has, it is said, a thousand rooms, two hundred and fifty for each of the four Orders of Islam, with lecture-halls attached, in which professors of the Order can lecture to the pupils in the style of mediæval Oxford.

"The four *mezhebs*, or principal sects, are the Hanafi, the Shafai, the Maliki, and the Hanbali. These sects differ on points of ritual and as regards the interpretation of certain portions of the Mohammedan law. The Turks in Egypt belong to the Hanafite sect. Most of the Egyptians belong to the Shafai, but some few to the Maliki sect. Below these four main divisions are a number of *Tarikas*, or minor sects, which were called into existence at a later period of Islamism than the *mezhebs*. Two of the minor sects, the Wahabi and Senussi, have played a considerable part in recent history, and are noted for their fanaticism."—Sladen's *Egypt and the English*, p. 373.

Arab artificer, for, thanks to Lord Cromer, the premier building of Islam is being restored to its former dignity. Unless you have an expert with you there is little to be gained by exploring this part of the mosque, but if you can smother your æsthetic emotions there is much to be gleaned from a visit to the tomb-chamber under the great brick cupola, a hundred and seventy feet high, the finest in shape and size of all the hundred domes in Cairo. It is of the usual type, with the two-tiered altar tomb of the founder, in a cage of massive oak bars eight feet high. Here, too, under the dome are splendid Arabic inscriptions, and under them the rich marble panelling which the Arab copied from the Norman of Sicily. The matrix and pendentive ornamentation of the cut angles on which the vast dome rests were very rich and beautiful in their day. They were made with wood and leather and masses of colour. One corner has been restored to show what it will look like, and it left the impression on me that the restorations will look crude for another hundred years, which was probably exactly as the mosques looked when they were new. But it is distressing to the eye accustomed to the artistic restorations of Italy; no one could tell what is old and what is new on the south front of St. Mark's; which reminds me of old Nosy the Italian barber who used to cut my hair at Geelong. Signor Noseda, for that was his real name, though no one ever called him by it, used to ask all his customers, "Shall I cut your hair to look as if it had been cut a week?" It would be well if the restorers of Sultan Hassan's mosque would try and make it look as if it had been restored for a century.

Just off the Sharia Mohammed Ali, a little below the Governorat, are two other notable mosques, Sitt' Safiya, which was built in 1604, and is supposed by the Egyptians of to-day to earn its name from a resemblance to the great mosque of Santa Sofia in Constantinople, whereas it is really called after the Venetian wife of Sultan Amurath III. It was built by one of her eunuchs, but the Validê Safiya took the credit of it as Henry VIII. took the credit of

Cardinal Wolsey's Christ Church and Hampton Court. It stands at the head of an imposing flight of steps, and should certainly be seen, because it differs from all the other mosques of Cairo in its rather elegant arrangements and decorations, and has a fine flavour of antiquity about it, though it is only half as old as most of the finest mosques.

If Sitt' Safiya only owes its name to a Sultana its pulpit at any rate is copied from Santa Sofia. It is the finest sculptured marble pulpit in Cairo. The *mihrab* here is lined with fine blue Persian tiles. Domes are the feature of Sitt' Safiya: there are half a dozen minor domes clustered round the charmingly arranged central dome with its elegant gallery. The *dikka* is of *meshrebiya* work, of which there is a good deal in this mosque.

It is, however, extremely difficult to tell the age of any Arab building by its architecture, for their architects often built in the style of two or three centuries earlier, and Arabs never restore anything, so that a flavour of decay and antiquity is easily acquired. All the mosques in Cairo which have been restored owe their restoration to English influence. Among them there is no more conspicuous instance than the exquisite little mosque of El-Bordeini, built A.D. 1630 in the style of the fifteenth century and restored in 1885. Nowhere in Cairo except in one mosque in the Citadel is the Sicilian-Norman marble-panelling of walls more beautifully imitated: it has a richly painted raftered roof in the style of the Kait Bey mosques, and windows of the pierced plaster-work, set with fragments of coloured glass, in which the Arabs excel. The pulpit is of the carved and inlaid and overlaid dark wood used in the screens of the old Coptic churches and cost, it is said, four thousand pounds. The *mihrab* or Mecca niche is very rich and the minaret is a fantasia in stone; hardly any mosque in Cairo is so richly decorated.

The Kesun mosque in the Sharia Mohammed Ali, a little below Sitt' Safiya, founded in 1330, was almost the finest in Cairo till Ismail Pasha cut the Sharia Mohammed Ali right through it.

One might have excused this piece of vandalism for the sake of the mile-long view of the majestic Citadel if Ismail had only left as it was the part of the mosque which had not to be pulled down. Instead of this he rebuilt it in a sort of Early Victorian way, leaving hardly a trace of its original grandeur. It was a mosque of the type of El-Merdani

The first important street between this and the Citadel called successively the Sharia Serugiya, the Sharia el-Magharbilin and the Sharia Kasabet Radowan contains a number of charming little mosques and *sawiyas* on its right-hand side, generally with elegant sculptured domes of the Mameluke period. I never succeeded in getting into any of them, because they are only open when they are being used for prayers, and no one in the neighbourhood ever knew who kept the key, even when they were cross-questioned by my pertinacious Ali. It is quite likely that they were not worth going into. These less important mosques are generally decorated in the crudest way inside with aniline colour washes. The lower-class Arabs seldom have any taste.

The same remarks might be applied to the mosques of the long street called in its various parts Sharia Bab-el-Bahr, Sûk-el-Khasher, Sûk-es-Zalat and Sharia el-Emir-el-Giyûchi. There are several delightful-looking old mosques in this street, and one of them at any rate has satisfactory architectural features inside, but the colour washes used inside those which I was able to visit were generally appalling. There is one exception—a mosque situated just off the main street in a *cul-de-sac*, very difficult to find, that of Abu Bekr Mazhar el-Ansari. This is one of the best small mosques in Cairo, and can best be reached from a turn on the left-hand side of the Sharia el-Marguchi, which is a continuation of the Sharia en-Nahassin as you go towards the mosque of El-Hakim. It is a mosque of the Kaït Bey type built in 1480. It has one of the finest pulpits in Cairo, made in the Coptic style of dark wood, with ivory inlays carved with extraordinary delicacy and with ivory matrix work round its canopy, and

delicate ivory mosaics on the door at the foot of its stair. None of the painted ceilings of Cairo mosques are more unspoiled, hardly any is so beautiful, and its *dikka*, in the style of the music galleries in our mansions of the fifteenth century, is a most charming affair supported on brackets with fine matrix carving. The walls and pavement are panelled in the Sicilian-Norman style with tessellated marbles, in which porphyry and *verde antico* are the chief ornaments. It has two *liwâns* with three elegant stilted arches, and its restored windows of *plâtre ajouré* set with coloured glass are very effective. Not only is the mosque itself unique in type, very beautiful and very unrestored, but it is surrounded by picturesque and interesting old houses.

I now come to another group of mosques which I may call the Gamaliya group, and in which the Abu Bekr mosque might almost be included. The rest are disappointing because the Gamaliya and the streets leading off it form with their houses one of the most unspoiled bits of mediæval Cairo, but do not contain a single mosque to rave over. The finest mosque of the Gamaliya is closed and at present in ruins, but it looked to me capable of being restored to a worthy rival of El-Moayyad and El-Merdani. The mosque of Sultan Beybars on the opposite side of the road is of high antiquity; it was founded in 1308, but it is in a very uninteresting condition; its restorations in its six centuries of existence have all been dowdy.

In the mass of ruins between the Gamaliya and the Sharia En-Nahassin there are the ruins of two or three fine mosques, one of which, almost opposite the Barkukiya, is being restored and looks as if it might be made beautiful.

In this group must be included the great old mosque of El-Hakim, the fourth in antiquity of the mosques of Cairo, for it was founded in 1012 and restored in 1359. It is of great size. It is interesting as being the most ancient in form of the mosques of El-Kahira, the city of Gohar, for El-Azhar, which was founded thirty years earlier, has been restored out of recognition, though it preserves a few bits of its original fabric. It stood outside the walls of El-Kahira, being a

formidable fortress in itself, though it is inside the walls of Saladin, midway between his two great gates, the Bab-en-Nasr and the Bab-el-Fûtûh. It is perhaps due to its position that its minarets are not true minarets but *mabkharas*, structures like the pylons of the ancient Egyptian temples. This mosque is spoiled by the factories and so on established in its interior. It is of the same type as Ibn Tulun, having long arcades of stilted arches resting on piers; its *liwân*, which formerly sheltered the Cairo museum, is now used for storing thousands of the large lanterns used in Mohammedan festivals. There are a good many inscriptions on the walls.

From the mosque of El-Hakim it is natural to pass to the mosque of Ibn Tulun, though it is in the Katai quarter, more than two miles away, for they are built in the same style. El-Azhar, the University of Islam, must be left to a separate chapter.

On the road to Katai one may take in the old street called the Hilmiya, which runs out from the Sharia Mohammed Ali to the Chikkun mosque, and is rather noted for its Dervish *tekkes*. Here is the delightful old mosque called El-Mas, which makes one more in love with the simple beauty of Mohammedan worship than any other mosque I know. It stands rather below the level of the road. It is very old, built in 1330; its gracious little dome and minaret, its deeply recessed entrance, and its windows look as if they were covered with lace, so exquisite is the plaster fretwork with which their masonry is decorated. Their whole form is lovely and antique, and the thoroughfare is quiet and dignified. When we entered the mosque our impression of delight was heightened. The courtyard is so peaceful and old and beautiful. It is one of those mosques which only consists of courtyards and colonnades separated by low balustrades of stone, so we could watch the worshippers easily without disturbing them, and they were so pious and wrapt that it was not difficult to photograph them unobserved. Its shafted windows are filled with lovely old carved and pierced teak; its columns are Roman monoliths of cippolino marble; its stilted arches are braided with arabesques; its walls are



arabesqued too, and its *iwân* has a screen like El-Merdani. The colonnade round the front court is delightful ; the *dikka*, like an ancient Norman pulpit, with eight columns, is on the top of the screen ; the *mihrab* is old and fretted ; a richly painted but perishing Arab inscription runs round the cornice, and in the court there is a fair fountain. The tomb-chamber is quite unrestored and has a rare old *mihrab* with very rich columns.

This mosque was full of the pious at prayer and meditation in every attitude of devotion. Every one was silent except the birds. The mosque has two serious rivals—Dervish *tekkes*. The beautiful gateway, numbered 7, which we passed on our way to it from the Sharia Mohammed Ali, belongs to the *tekke* where the Dervishes could till recently be seen dancing every Friday. Ali, my dragoman, gave it a pregnant definition, "Turkish people, tall hats, sleep here." The *tekke* has a courtyard like Santa Caterina at Taormina, and a praying platform ; it is quite a mosque really ; it has some lovely old Roman columns with matrix arches springing from them and a charming court with a big vine all over it and a garden like an Arab cemetery. There were *mastabas* all round under the colonnade with men lying on them. In the summer the Dervishes sleep on them. The gate has a tall, narrow portal like a bath, with an inscription in a very beautiful and curious writing on it under the matrix-headed apse.

A little beyond the El-Mas mosque at No. 33 Sharia Es-Siyûfiya is a fifteenth-century Dervish *tekke* with delightful fretted stone-work outside. The Dervish monastery behind has a cloister round a palm-garden with a fountain in the centre and a vine-arbour in front of the closed *tekke* and fountain of lustration. There is a picturesque outside stair leading up to the gallery. Here, too, all the Dervishes were Turks. Leaning against the door, taking no more notice of us than if he had been a statue, in his striped dress and Dervish hat was a Dervish of the sleepy Turkish type looking like a caricature of the late Sultan. Both the minaret and the dome have charmingly fretted stone panels. I had often

passed the *tekke*, taking it for an ordinary mosque. Close here, too, is the Mohammediya school, chiefly interesting to strangers as having a lovely four-arched antique *mak'ad* or court arcade. The exquisite little loggia on the street must, I suppose, belong to the same house.

And soon after this you find yourself beside the gorgeous new *sebil* of the Abbasides, the Khedivial family, and the famous Chikkun mosque, which is now two mosques, though it is spoken of as one. The southern building, though it is one of the most charming and typical mosques in Cairo, is seldom visited by foreigners.

It is very old, founded in the fourteenth century, and the best portions of it have not been restored. Added to this it is of an unusual form, it is a popular place of worship, and it contains the best Dervish *tekke* left in the capital.

I loved it from the moment that, after threading a passage, I entered its paved triangular courtyard, graced with a tumble-down old fountain of clear water and shady trees, and came to the long side of the triangle formed by the open *liwān*, an adorable place, with deep colonnades of antique stilted arches and an antique painted roof, which looked none the less picturesque because it was left in its pristine state and fading and perishing in parts. The long *liwān* was richly carpeted. My eye wandered from pulpit and *mihrab* to the iron gates, through which one could see the chambers of the holy men—the old Dervishes. They had little furniture except fine praying carpets, and their water-bottles. The Dervishes inside, walking about and muttering (prayers I suppose) or lying down, and resting on their elbows to read the Koran, glared at us resentfully, looking like caged lions.

But it appeared that they had no objection to our seeing over their quarters, for when we had finished with the mosque the attendant who had provided us with over-slippers asked if we should like to see the *tekkiya* and conducted us through the old men's little court and handsome *mandara* or reception-hall to their chambers, where they received us with perfect politeness but cold dignity. For an artist wishing to paint a fine *liwān* with a beautiful court, fountain, and trees and

open air in front of it, there is no mosque in Cairo better than the southern Chikkun mosque. This is a good mosque also for seeing the pious poor at worship. It is not so easy to find the pious rich praying, because they do it at home. The Egyptian attaches no extra value to prayers offered in a mosque.

The northern Chikkun mosque is not popular with worshippers ; it is altogether rather deserted, but it has interesting features, such as the three black glasses twenty-four inches by twelve, and extraordinarily thick, which came from Mecca in some such way as the miraculously transported column of El-Amr. Its beauty arises chiefly from neglect. It retains its old marble pavement ; it has a pleasing and wholly unrestored painted roof ; it has curious old tiles in its *mirhab* which have grown fewer year by year. And the *meshrebrya* cage for its tomb and the *plâtre ajouré* of its antique windows are very, very quaint.

The mosque of Ibn Tulun, finished in 878, is delightful ; it is far the oldest building in Cairo which retains its ancient form in anything like completeness, and it is also vast, majestic, and picturesque. It belongs to a different city, which was city and citadel in itself before El-Kahira was founded or the Citadel of Saladin dreamed of. It stands on high ground between the Citadel and old Cairo.

Its walled-in height was called the Castle of the Air and the Fortress of the Ram. Ibn Tulun himself, the first independent Caliph of Egypt, called it Katai, the wards. All round it were grouped his fabulously rich palace, the cantonments of his troops, the palaces of his Emirs, his race-course, and the very necessary fortifications. Extensive traces of these last are visible still. He determined to build a mosque that should be the finest in the world, in the style of the two great sanctuaries of Islam at Mecca and Kairwan. To build it he employed a Christian slave who, thinking that if he employed columns, every church in Egypt would be robbed to supply them, conceived the idea of substituting brick piers covered with the marvellous Arab cement, which is as indestructible as stone. The Caliph allowed him to carry out his

ideas, and between 876 and 878 the mosque was completed, being opened in 879.

The glory of Arab plaster-work is that instead of being hideous, like the stucco of the baroque architect, it has the graciousness of marble. While it is wet they carve it into the delicate fretwork which looks like lace netted out of threads of stone. This is applied either to the decoration of solid surfaces or for the formation of windows with light and air passing through the crevices; this, the *plâtre ajouré* of the French, sometimes has its crevices filled with gems of coloured glass. Columns can be made of it which have the finish and durability of marble; arches can be moulded in it as beautiful as the ogive arches of Venetian windows. This is the material in which the gloriously beautiful inscriptions in Cufic or old Arabic characters stand out so splendidly in the mosques of Cairo. The Arab owes his mastery over sculpturing in plaster, to working at it like a fresco painter before it sets. And the mosque of Ibn Tulun is a veritable museum of every phase of this conjuring in plaster, most of which has defied the elements for a thousand years.

There we have it. The greatest and most romantic of the mosques of Cairo standing on its hill-side a thousand years old.

Until the English came and decreed its salvation, it was built over with all sorts of unsightly habitations for paupers and was a regular Lazare House. Now we have it in its original outlines if not its original splendour. It was time the English came. Only in the last few years the panels of the pulpit of 1297 were removed to the South Kensington Museum and replaced by unworthy successors.

The mosque of Ibn Tulun is glorious whether you see it in a fierce Egyptian noon, when the shadows are bright purple against the glare of the sunlight on the sand; or at sunset, when the courts are flooded with the light from the west and you see magic from the gallery of the minaret. There is a great ruined rampart round its battlemented walls with a broad waste between. A flight of steps sweeps up into one of those long quiet arcades. The bays of the *liwān* are

outlined with great piers, whose fantastically stilted arches are bordered with rich arabesques. Along its back wall is a clerestory of hundreds of those lace-like windows of *plâtre ajouré*, with white light filtering through. Some, alas, are falling into decay. Twenty yards to the left of the pulpit is a *mihrab* of that *plâtre ajouré* so perished that it looks like a moth-eaten Oriental shawl. The *mimbar* has the airiest wood-work of them all—a grated criss-cross, and all so perishing. On every side are mighty spaces, and the hoary lace-work of sculptured plaster. Here again the chrysanthemum or sun-disk emblem is much in evidence.

The mosque of Ibn Tulun is superlative. Its size is so splendid; it has such a broad Alhambra and Kairwan effect, and the dome in its centre is charming. More than any other building, it shows the marvellous "capabilities" of plaster, so majestic, so enduring, so lovely. And now I come to the minaret of many legends. It is like a round lighthouse, with a spiral stair winding round it, rising from a square tower. It is not a pure minaret, but a *mabkhara* of the pylon type something like those of the El-Hakim mosque. It owes its peculiar shape, according to legend, to the fact that it was Ibn Tulun's boast that he never wasted time. One day his Vizier caught him making a spiral with a piece of paper. Rather than admit that he was idle he said that the spiral was to be the model for his new minaret.

Be that as it may, its shape is unique; and what a view there is from it at sunset. Near in there are ancient palaces and gardens, a few left perfect, the majority in the throes of destruction by the jerry-builder. Their very destruction is instructive, for you get sections of harems like the plans in books about Pompeii. Mosques and minarets are dotted all round, but not in hundreds; only one here and there, mostly embellished by decay. In the long street outside almost overhanging the mosque walls, are stately old mansions with vast projecting harem windows enveloped in rich screens of *meshrebiya*, browned and warped by centuries. Farther afield, on one side is the vast expanse of modern Cairo bounded by the Nile, a blue ribbon; the

desert, a brown cloak spread upon the ground; and the Pyramids purple against the overpowering Egyptian sunset. It is good to see the Pyramids from the ancient hill where the ark is said to have grounded, and Abraham to have found the ram caught in the thicket, sent by the Lord to save the life of Isaac. To this day the embattled brow of Ibn Tulun's hill is called the Fort of the Ram.

But for pure physical delight all this is as nothing when you turn your back on the sunset to see the picture it paints on the east. First you have the thousand-year-old arcade and the arabesques flooded with liquid gold, and behind that you have the fantastic domes and minarets and altars of the Tombs of the Mamelukes and Saladin's Citadel carried up to heaven by the towering dome, and minarets of Mehemet Ali's mosque, dyed a wonderful colour that is not gold and is not pink and is not orange and is not purple but is the essence of them all. And away in the distance, with the skeleton of a mosque on the skyline, are the grim Mokattams, the mountains which are the overlords of Cairo.

From Ibn Tulun's mosque it is natural to turn to the only mosque in Cairo of still more ancient foundation, the mosque built by El-Amr, who conquered Egypt for Islam. In its foundation it is one of the oldest mosques in Islam, having been founded in 643, but it was rebuilt in the fifteenth century and has often been restored since on account of the prophecy that, with its destruction, Egypt would be lost to Islam. Like Ibn Tulun's, it is built round an open court, but only the single colonnade on the entrance side and the *liwân* of six aisles remain. The two side colonnades have fallen. The courtyard is like a bit of the desert with a nice old fountain and two ancient palms in its centre. The *liwân* is as venerable as anything in Egypt, with its six rows of antique marble columns, which have all done duty in temples of Greek and Roman Egypt, and not a few of them in churches as well. This mosque is full of pathetic touches, with the fallen columns of its courtyard, its air of desertedness—it is so seldom used

for regular worship—and its evidences of superstition and pilgrimage.

What could be more pathetic than the sort of antique altar, with its two little columns worn into holes the size of a cuttle-fish because generations of mothers have rubbed those spots with lemon so that their babies might cry when their mouths were held to it; for if they went away from Amr's Mosque without a cry they might be dumb?

Close by the entrance again are a pair of columns so close that a man can hardly squeeze through them. Every good Mohammedan was supposed to squeeze through them. When the custom was prevalent many miracles must have been needed if adipose was as common in the Cairo Arab as it is to-day.

Outside this grand old mosque is only a low whitewashed wall with two plaster minarets like stumpy lighthouses. Such a poor old red-and-white striped affair, so modern. One is unprepared for that fierce Kairwan square and that forest of noble arches behind.

I have purposely left to the end the mosque which of all those in Cairo itself comes nearest to our preconceived ideas, that of Kait Bey in the city, not to be confused with his exquisite mosque out in the Tombs of the Caliphs.

It is difficult to find. It lies away behind the mosque of Ibn Tulun, whose long battlemented wall has to be skirted. After this you find yourself in an old street with the best overhanging *meshrebriya'd* harem windows in Cairo. Few foreigners must visit it, for the people in the quarter, which is a very low one, almost mob a stranger yelling for *bakshish*. But when you do get to the mosque you are amply repaid: it is the most perfect in conception and condition of all the fifteenth-century mosques of Cairo and is the most richly decorated.

It is the Mohammedan-renaissance type of mosque, resembling the *mandara* or reception-hall of a palace, with a cupola over the *durka'a* in the centre, a *liwân* at each end, and hardly any colonnading at the sides; the floor of its *durka'a* is resplendent with tessellated marbles;

the great single arches which divide the *liwāns* from it are of striped stone pleasantly mellowed; the side walls are decorated with various types of graceful arches delightfully fretted and full of all the architectural ornament in which the Saracens delighted. The two *liwāns* have the paintings of their four-hundred-years-old ceilings quite unspoiled, delicious masses of soft, rich colouring. The pulpit is a *chef-d'œuvre* of hardwood carved and inlaid in the Coptic style: it is said to have cost a thousand pounds four hundred years ago.

The charm of this *chef-d'œuvre* of Kait Bey lies in its exquisitely harmonious proportions, its extraordinary wealth of architectural ornament, and its soft old colouring. The marble panelling of its walls is worthy of Sicily. Columns play only a small part in the scheme, but the matrix and pendentive ornaments are used with wonderful effect; every useless angle has been cut off to make room for pendentives.

I must not close this chapter without an allusion to the perfect mosque of this same Kait Bey out in the Tombs of the Caliphs, where there are no surrounding buildings to interfere with its effect. The admirably restored interior has lost the mellow sanctuary effect of the Kait Bey mosque in the city, but the exterior for harmony and airy grace and Saracenic poetry of conception is unmatched even in Cairo; it is absolutely delightful from the broad flight of steps that lead up to its graceful porch to the arcaded belvedere in the corner, the fretted mameluke dome and the fantastic minaret. The mosques of Cairo form a book of poetry in stone which is without a match,



## CHAPTER XVI

### El-Azhar, the University of the Mohammedan World

THE mosques of Cairo are like the colleges of Oxford. Both began as half religious, half educational foundations, though religion is dying of decline in the Western city and education in the Eastern.

It is a far cry from the city on the banks of the Isis to the river, on whose banks the other Isis was the Madonna in the primæval days, when the world looked to Egypt for illumination in religion. The world of those days meant the countries which had the Mediterranean for their highway. But there is another world, which stretches from the sunrise in the south of Asia to the sunset in the north of Africa—from Yunnan in China to Morocco, which still looks to Egypt as the fountain-head of Mohammedan learning. In the vast and ancient mosque of El-Azhar at Cairo is a University of nearly ten thousand students from every corner of Islam. Nor is this the only mosque devoted to education. Every mosque in Cairo which is not a mere tomb is a college, and if their dormitories for students are not like Oxford rooms, a cell over which the sun cannot tyrannise is all the Oriental asks, especially where he is not called upon for fees, and may even receive a daily dole of bread.

The resemblance between the quadrangles of learning in Cairo and the quadrangles of learning at Oxford is heightened when one compares their buildings. For the magic of the Middle Ages is enshrined in both.

But there is one prime difference between them, that whereas the colleges of Oxford have lost all trace of having been founded for the poor, all Moslem mosques, universities, colleges, and schools are more or less charities.

Mr. Margoliouth, the greatest scholar that Oxford ever produced, in his learned book on Cairo, Jerusalem, and Damascus, derived from Arab sources, and published by Chatto & Windus a year or two ago, gives the following account of the foundation of El-Azhar, the principal University of the Mohammedan world, which is established in a vast and ancient mosque at Cairo :

" One of the earliest cares of Jauhar, the conqueror of Egypt, for the Fatimides, was to build a mosque for public worship, and this project was the commencement of the famous Al-Azhar. It took about two years to erect, and was finished June 14, 972. It was not at first a literary institution any more than any other mosque; all such places had from the beginning of Islam served as rendezvous for savants, and places where those who undertook to interpret the Koran or recite traditions could establish themselves. The line between religious and secular studies was not drawn during the early centuries of Islam; men made circles in the mosques for the purpose of reciting verses, or telling literary anecdotes, as well as for instruction of a more decidedly edifying character. The first mosque ever built in Islam, that of the prophet at Medinah, had served a number of purposes, for which separate buildings were deemed necessary in more specialising days: it had not only been church and school, but town hall, hospice, and hospital as well. Since politics and religion could not be kept distinct, the mosque was the place where announcements of importance respecting the commonwealth might be made. The ideas connected with it in some ways resembled those which attach to a church, in others were more like those which are connected with a synagogue, but the peculiar evolution of Islam furnished it with some which those other buildings do not share.

" The person who conceived the idea of turning the first mosque of the new city into a university was the astute

convert from Judaism who had suggested to the Fatimide sovereign that the time was ripe for the conquest of Egypt, and had been rewarded for his advice by being made vizier. . . . In 967 he embraced Islam, and took into his house a tutor who could give him regular instruction in the matters which a Moslem gentleman should know. Once vizier, he followed the example of many who had previously held that high office in becoming a patron of learning and belles lettres ; on Thursday evenings he regularly held a *salon* in his house for the recitation of his own compositions but also for the reunion of all the savants of Cairo.

"The notion, however, of Jacob, son of Killis, in encouraging learning was somewhat deeper than that which had inspired many other viziers. Since the Fatimide dynasty had succeeded in virtue of its religious claims, it was necessary to provide for its maintenance by a body of literature comparable with that which the supporters of the rival Caliph could display, and which enjoyed widespread respect and authority owing to the long series of venerated names concerned with its composition and perpetuation. These authoritative books once provided, and arrangements being made whereby their study could be encouraged and maintained, no mean dam would be provided against inundation from without. The books, therefore, he composed himself ; the University was to secure that they should be properly studied and interpreted.

"In 988, when the second Fatimide Caliph was reigning, Jacob Ibn Killis requested his master to provide a grant for the maintenance of a fixed number of scholars. The Caliph Aziz assented ; provisions were made for thirty-five students, and a house adjoining Jauhar's mosque secured for lodging.

"Thus began Al-Azhar, whose name is thought to have been selected out of compliment to the supposed foundress of the Fatimide line, Fatimah, honourably called Al-Zahra (the luminous), of which Azhar is the masculine. This year's statistics give 9,758 as the present number of students, with 317 professors. At times the numbers of both have been still greater."

There seems to be a consensus of opinion that El-Azhar cannot be taken very seriously as a means of general education. Lord Cromer upon this point quotes Hughes's "Dictionary of Islam." The chief aim and object of education in Islam, Hughes says, "is to obtain a knowledge of the religion of Mohammed, and anything beyond this is considered superfluous and even dangerous." And commenting upon this Lord Cromer makes this caustic confession as to his own action: "Under these circumstances, it was clear to the British reformer that the education imparted at the famous University of El-Azhar could not be utilised to raise the general standard of education in Egypt."

He therefore left that institution alone, and the editor of one of the leading Arabic newspapers in Cairo declared to me in 1908 that the only use he could see in El-Azhar was that its students were exempted from the conscription. It is a fact that the so-called Liberal party in Egypt has for one of its planks the reform of El-Azhar into an active means of education. There are at the present moment over three hundred professors and ten thousand students—the latter come from all parts of the Mohammedan world. The students are much better treated than the professors from our point of view, for they get their board and lodging free, and some of them get doles of money; whereas the professors of El-Azhar are many of them not as well paid as the ordinary working-man. But some of them, judging from their appearance—their prosperous look and grand purple robes—whom I saw at the Khedivial reception when the Mahmal came back from Mecca, and at the Sheikh El-Bekri's pavilion at the Molid of the Prophet, must be quite well off, judged by these standards.

The head of El-Azhar is called the Sheikh of Islam. The students spend three, four, or six years at the University; the professors are called sheikhs. I have several times watched the students at El-Azhar, and each time was more convinced that the El-Azhar of to-day is like Oxford or Paris in the Middle Ages. There is of course great similarity in the subjects taught, for at Oxford six or seven hundred years ago the theological philosophy of the nominalists and realists was the

only thing that signified, a most elementary knowledge of the three R's sufficed ; and at El-Azhar to-day they are taught little but Mohammedan dogma. The ordinary information they receive is very meagre.

Also I imagine that the actual way of teaching in the Oxford of those days must have been very similar to what I saw at El-Azhar, though I do not suppose that Friar Bacon sat cross-legged on the top of a chair that looks more suitable for a washing-stand—the best comparison I can find for the *dikkas* on which the professors of El-Azhar sit when they do not take a more congenial seat on the ground. There is a professor with a class to every pillar in the *iwān*, and there are a hundred and forty of them. The other hundred and eighty professors take their classes wherever they can find room to sit down. Furniture is of no consequence to the Arab, who really prefers to sit on the ground.

It is a very curious sight to go into a building like El-Azhar and see thousands of men and boys employed in intellectual pursuits sitting on the ground or lying on their sheepskins, some under the sky, some in the various arcades. Very often only the teacher has a book. The boys, where they have anything at all, seem to have detached leaves and quires of books. They write industriously on "slates" of tin or yellow wood. They are not all learning: many of them are lying about sleeping or eating the dole of bread they receive from the University. They take their boots off at the door, but as it would be hopeless for any porter to try and look after ten thousand pairs of boots, they carry them in with them and stand them on the ground beside them while they are attending lectures, or studying, or resting, or sleeping. If they were not so desperately in earnest it really would be rather funny, this spectacle of a class of grown-up men squatting on the ground, with their boots and their bread and their water-bottles beside them, scribbling down on tin slates the remarks of a man seated on the ground like themselves, and seemingly poorer than any of them. The Sheikh or Professor reads from a sacred book, and explains each phrase. When a student knows a book by heart he receives a written

permission to deliver lectures in his turn. Law as well as religion is taught at El-Azhar, for Mohammedan law is administered in the Kadi's Courts, an anachronism which has been allowed to survive as a concession to Mohammedan feeling. The post of assistant-kadi is much coveted.

The doors of El-Azhar are always open. You can see the life of the University from the street, but you cannot enter if you are a Christian without being at once surrounded by attendants, who demand your mosque ticket, and when you have given that up, and written your name, and had your overshoes put on, you are very closely attended while you are walking about, and rather hurried through unless you are with a resident who is acquainted with his rights. The last time I went to El-Azhar I went with the editor of an Arab paper, and found it made all the difference in the world. We were allowed to stay as long as we liked everywhere, and were shown things I had never seen before. Each Moslem nation is entitled to have its own apartments and own teacher or teachers at El-Azhar. I stopped to see students from Morocco, Somaliland, Turkey, and India being taught. One of the students of Morocco was a man a good deal over sixty. I inquired through my friend why such an old man was going through a University course. I thought he might be the sheikh of a Morocco mosque, but he said that it was not so, that he lived at Mogador, which is on the west coast, and that he had come to El-Azhar because it was the only place where the exegesis of the Koran was satisfactory. I wonder what exegesis was in Arabic! But I was very much impressed with the earnestness of this old man, who looked very poor. The Turks a few yards on were young and wealthy-looking, and one of them was singularly beautiful. I asked my friend if he could find out something about this boy—was he the son of a Circassian harem beauty? But whether he was of too high rank or what, he did not seem inclined to answer any questions. When we came to the place where the Somali were being taught, they fled upstairs to their dormitory at the first question.

El-Azhar is so like and so unlike Oxford. The great

quadrangle and porter's lodge, the notice-board at the door—these were like Oxford, but the quadrangle, full of squatting and reclining students, was more like a Japanese wrestling-booth, and the fantastic minarets, the most fantastic in Cairo, formed an incongruous element. It was very noisy, for the Moslem boy repeats his lessons aloud while he is learning them, and sways his head and body all the time. Some of the classes were of very small boys, and there were both little girls and little boys at them. The girls are on the increase; but they must not speak—they are only allowed to listen. The lecture-hours in the morning are from nine to one, and they begin again at 1.30. Work, however, did not seem to be proceeding arduously. Until the age of fifteen the students are only allowed to learn to read the Koran. After that they may take a scientific course. It is only quite lately that the boys have been allowed to come in *tarbushes* instead of turbans. Most of the boys are dressed in black, but a few wear white. The red-and-yellow slippers of Islam are largely in evidence. All the students use the brass Turkish inkpots. Their books, where they have any, have only a narrow line of text on the right of the page; the broad part on the left is commentary. Generally, as I have said, they have to be content with a few leaves. Although no one is allowed to wear boots in El-Azhar, the stone of the pavement is as worn and as polished as ivory.

El-Azhar is an enormous building, as may be imagined, and its buildings are of all ages, from that of Sultan Jauhar, who founded the mosque in 970-972, to the present Khedive, who has built rather a handsome mosque for it, which reminded me of our school chapels. It is not much used: the Mohammedan does not need a chapel. The oldest parts are therefore getting on for a thousand years old. They are built of the extraordinarily durable Arab plaster. The *mihrab* is original, and probably the cupola of it also. Their *plâtre ajouré* is almost filled up with the whitewash of many centuries. There are some other pieces of plaster-work, which appear to be of about the same age, scattered about the *liwân*. The courtyard, which is made rather picturesque

by the split Arab battlements, has been recently done up. There is, as might be expected, a Kait Bey building in El-Azhar—a beautiful little mosque. There is also, opposite a street entrance to the *liwân*, a magnificent building of the Kait Bey period, with the finest exterior of any palace in Cairo, which is now an *okelle*, or tenement house. This clearly ought to be acquired by the University for a students' boarding-house, because they have not sufficient accommodation for all their students; and so noble a building, with its grand recessed portal, fretted façade, and beautiful window arches, should be devoted to some public purpose. It was a perfect delight to stand by the open door opposite and look into the *liwân*, with its forest of marble antique columns and its graceful stilted arches, and its old, old carved ark pulpit, always looking so shaded and cool, no matter how fierce the sun was outside; always full of earnest students with such bright, intelligent faces, and some of them so intent, kneeling in rings round their teachers. It was easy here to realise the force of the saying of Solomon "Black but comely." Sometimes the even tenor of the scene was broken by something strange, such as the group of princes, in bright striped burnouses, from the shores of Lake Chad, who took their lecture standing. Once I saw about twenty Abyssinians drawn up in two rows like military drill. One thing I noticed in particular was that their religion seemed an absolute bond of Freemasonry between them; another was the universality of the Arab language in various dialects; for, different as these dialects may be, the language serves as a common meeting-ground. It was quite a shock for me to pass from the *liwân* and the battlemented court packed with Oriental humanity, into the office, a purely western room with a telephone.



## CHAPTER XVII

### Old Cairo and the Wonderful Coptic Churches of Babylon

OLD Cairo is not a mere term of effect. It is not a summarisation of mediæval remains—it is the name of the quarter of the city built on the fringe of the Roman fortress and the original capital of the Caliphs. This original capital was not called Cairo—Amr-ibn-el-Asi, the victorious general of the Caliph Omar, who conquered Egypt in A.D. 638 called it Fustat, perhaps from the leather tent which he used while he was besieging the Roman fortress, though etymologists believe that the name is the Byzantine corruption of the Roman *fossatum*—an entrenched camp.

Old Cairo itself is of no great interest except as a rather unspoiled patch of native life with quaint little mosques. But it is surrounded with *bonnes bouches* for the kodaker and the antiquarian.

It stands right on the Nile. Men, women, and children, primitive enough in their simplicity for the wilds of Upper Egypt, swarm down its steep bank into the battered *gyassa* which is to take them across the swift current to the village of Gizeh, which gives its name and nothing more to the Pyramids.

Right under the bank is the island of Roda, where, according to tradition (and to be near enough to Cairo), Moses was found in the bulrushes. Across the Nile is the long line of the Pyramids from Medum to Abû Roasch, the famous Field of the Pyramids.

Right above the streets of old Cairo rises the Egyptian Babylon, the fortress of the Romans besieged and taken by

Amr, and monopolised, since its ruin, by the Copts. And beyond that are the vast mounds which contain in their bosoms all that was left of Fustat, when it had been burnt in 1168 to prevent it falling into the hands of the Crusaders.

It is of Fustat and Babylon that I must write, for neither receives its meed at the hands of the tourist.

Fustat began to lose its importance when the Caliph Ibn Tulun built his mosque, which still survives, and his palace in the quarter now called Katai. A new city sprang up round them; Fustat grew still further neglected.

When Gohar el-Kaid conquered Egypt for the Fatimite Caliphs, and founded the new palace known as El-Kahira, or the Splendid, in 969, it lay between the Citadel and the Governorat, and the bazars and the native streets surrounding them stand upon its site. The noble old loggia of the Beit-el-Kadi just above the Sûk of the Coppersmiths is part of the Palace of El-Kahira, though built long after the days of Gohar.

When the Crusaders were sweeping down on Cairo, since the Saracenic forces were not sufficient to hold so large an area, Fustat was committed to the flames. The fire burnt steadily for fifty-four days. Those who have seen, even the day after, the débris of a great fire, can understand how the dust-storms and the intermittent rain of seven or eight centuries have turned the smouldering ruins of the city of Amr into the fortress-like mounds of the Fustat of to-day.

These mounds of Fustat are extraordinary even in a land of marvels. They are of vast extent, stretching from the Coptic fastnesses and churches of Babylon almost to the mosque of Tulun and the Tombs of the Mamelukes—they look like a bit of the desert. Their sandhills are regular cliffs and valleys, and you expect them to contain the tombs of the functionaries of the Pharaohs. There is hardly one trace of a building to be found in them, so deadly was that prototype of the burning of Moscow in the face of French invaders. But where walls and houses perished, the little things of household use survived. Fustat is full of precious fragments of the early Middle Ages.

A few enterprising foreigners, curious tourists or antiquaries, a few Arabs promised piastres for interesting fragments, come and dig wherever a landslip or a storm of wind lays bare a load of pottery. I myself have been several times, and with the aid only of knife and stick, have collected fragments of ancient faience enough to fill another case like that in the South Kensington Museum, which is filled with these fragments from Fustat. They are mostly portions of lamps, or bowls, or vases. The lamps, of a kind of green majolica, are the most perfect, but not so interesting as the brilliant pieces of broken glass and earthenware vessels. The earthenware is of the richest colours, and frequently of intricate and beautiful designs. I picked up a few pieces with Arabic writing on them; many with delightful arabesques. Some of the most beautiful were in dark blue on that rich sky-blue ground which stamps a thing as Arabic or Persian. I found a good many pieces also of Chinese china. Some of the colours were glorious; many had patterns inside; some were of large size, the glaze on some was like glass, the sixteenth or the thirty-second part of an inch thick, very shining. I never found any of the tiles from Fustat which collectors prize; probably they came from deeper levels. The glass was most interesting. I found some pieces, especially in dark blue, which looked as old as Roman glass, and a great many fragments of enamelled glass bracelets.

One day I was lucky enough to strike a dump of Ancient Egyptian remains, from which I got a perfect little specimen of a ram-headed sphinx, about an inch and a half in length.

It was only towards the end of my stay in Cairo that I started fossicking in the mounds of Fustat. Dr. Phillips, one of the leading Cairo doctors, who had antiquarian tastes like myself, hearing that I had never explored Fustat, took me there in his motor, and from that time forward I went there about twice a week. Quite apart from the treasures one expects to find there, Fustat is fascinating. Its square mile of the wind-swept sand and dust hardening into rock is honey-combed with the shafts of treasure-seekers. Its bluffs are steep and contorted; as the shades of night fall you might

take it for a lava field of Etna or one of Doré's illustrations to the *Inferno*. A Japanese would be delighted with it—he would see in it the Himalayas in miniature; he would lay it out into a mountain landscape like his inimitable miniature Chinese gardens.

Here and there, in a cave scooped out by the treasure-seeker, a miserable Arab is encamped with his cooking-pot and his water-pitcher for his sole furniture, to add to the note of solitude. It looks the very place for foot-pads, but I never heard of a foreigner being molested.

Some portions of Fustat are quite high and command a really magnificent view, for this grave of a city, is bounded on two sides by the Roman-looking aqueduct of the famous Saladin, and on a third one has the Citadel with its soaring mosque, and the fantastic domes of the Tombs of the Mamelukes, while on the fourth side there is the Nile, with the most ancient works of man silhouetted on its horizon.

Such is Fustat. At its foot lies one of the most ancient mosques in the world—the mosque of Amr, though most of its present buildings, antique as they are, belong to a later date than his. It has ancient company, the fortress-like *ders* of the Copts, and the Babylon which was the Citadel of the Romans.

The mosque of Amr has no external graces; its low plaster walls, washed red and white, hardly emerging from the sandhills, might enclose a camel-market; there is but one short, plain minaret to break two hundred yards of wall.

Inside it is impressive by its size and its simplicity. It comes so very near nature, with the sand half-burying its fallen columns, and the wind and the dust wandering through its long colonnades; it might almost be a bit of Karnak.

Your first impression is a great dusty whitewashed quadrangle with poor little trees. You see a plain octagonal fountain with antique columns and a tall single palm in the centre, but the fountain is empty. The old cippolino columns of the mosque are peeling, like the onions which gave them their name. The *mihrab* is only painted, and the pulpit is a very plain affair. The fretwork of the

minaret is sugared over with whitewash. Yet the effect of the huge open colonnade, with its hundred and twenty-six columns from Roman temples retreating in six stately rows, is very restful, and some of the details are delightful; its miraculous properties fall into another chapter.

At the back of the mosque of Amr, between it and the lovely pointed arches of Saladin's aqueduct, lie the deformed and distorted sandhills which mark the site of the Fustat of the precious fragments, the earliest Cairo except the citadel of Babylon, which still survives by the crossing of the Nile to the island Nilometer

And now of Babylon, which contains the finest Roman masonry of Egypt: long curtain walls which have defied time and assault and conflagration, one splendid gate, and more than one grand round bastion. Two of these bastions shield churches of rival Christian faiths: a Greek cathedral is in one, the secret chapel of the Hanging Church of the Copts is in the other. The cathedral is no longer the metropolitan church; the cathedral of to-day is in the crowded Greek quarter at the back of the Musky, and has an interior like a Roman Catholic church of Nonconformist plainness. You hardly see the exterior.

But the old cathedral out in Babylon, with only its masonry restored when I saw it, had the beauty and solemnity and majesty of a temple. Its effects were secured with simple features, a graceful arcade carried round the exterior of the bastion, loftiness and the appearance of antiquity within. It reminded me for some reason of the classical Roman buildings which survive as churches in Rome itself—S. Costanza or S. Stefano Rotondo.

From the roof you have the most charming view in all Cairo—right under your feet are the vineyards which veil the seven ancient churches of Babylon, and the little citadels, like squares of infantry on Wellington's battlefields defying sudden onslaughts, in which the Copts sheltered their religion in the days of Moslem oppression. The Nile, with Moses's Isle and Gizeh and the desert and the Pyramids across its waters, seems but a stone's throw away. It must

have washed the walls in the old times before, when Babylon was the outwork of the City of the Sun

Turning round, you have Saladin's aqueduct stealing across the edge of the Arabian desert like the works of Rome's first great emperors. And if you follow its line round the troubled sea of sandhills which we call Fustat, always with a background of desert, you have Cairo with its long line of minarets and domes and its towering Citadel crowned by Mehemet Ali's soaring Turkish mosque, framed in a glorious triptych which has for its unfolded wings the Tombs of the Caliphs on the north and the Tombs of the Mamelukes on the south, and the mosques and rugged slopes of the Mokattams for its central screen. Choose sunset for your time, and this whole pageant of Cairo lying between the sandy sea and that background of fantasy will be lit with an unearthly splendour of gold and crimson and purple, hung over everything like a transparent garment cast from heaven by invisible hands.

Here you will see best that Cairo is a city of the desert which would be overwhelmed like an army cut off in an enemy's country, if it were not for the Nile, an impregnable line of communication.

It is best to explore the seven Coptic churches before you go to the roof of the Greek cathedral for the view, because Coptic churches are, in the nature of things, dark, being buried from the sight of the oppressor in fortresses or masses of private buildings. The only one that has an exterior is the Mo'allaka, the famous Hanging Church of Babylon. This is one of the most beautiful churches in Christendom. It is not wrong to mention it in the same breath as the Cappella Reale at Palermo, and St. Mark's at Venice itself. Its mosaics are not extensive; it has not their wealth of marbles, though it is richly adorned with both, transfused with the mellowness of antiquity, but it has the finest ancient woodwork in the world; it is lined throughout for several feet from the ground with screens of dark polished wood inlaid with ivory and ebony medallions chased with inimitable Byzantine carvings; the screens are broken by antique stilted arches of ivory.

The effect of this dark polished mysterious screening gives a new significance to the words "dim religious light."

Al Mo'allaka is small, like that Royal Chapel of Palermo, but its very smallness is a beauty, for it brings you near to the dark screen crowned with golden ikons, and the antique columns of marble taken from some Roman temple, which break it up into the place of the women and the place of the men and the place of the priests. Behind the glorious screen, which goes all round the church, are various little cabinets or chapels. One has an image of the Virgin, soft and lovely enough for a Greuze, painted by Roman hands before the dour Byzantine ideas crushed human outlines out of holy faces. Another has a most curious painted cabinet with a lamp swaying in front of it, and wooden drums like the shells for modern artillery, containing the relics.

At every point the Hanging Church of Babylon is the queen of all the seven churches. The apse of the sanctuary has still its ancient richness of marble; the baldacchini are in the ancient basilica style, and the chief baldacchin has still its ancient marble columns. The pulpit is, after the screen, the gem of the whole building. More than any mosque lectern in Cairo, it is the rival of the oldest and quaintest pulpits of Lombard Italy. It is very long and very narrow, only just wide enough to walk in; it stands on fifteen delicate shafts of rare marbles; its panels are a medley of inlay and bas-relief; it has hardly a straight line in it; its colours are melted into a harmony.

The fantastic and richly carved reading desks of Al Mo'allaka face the screen instead of the congregation. There is a fine old barrel roof above, bolted to open woodwork like the timbers of a ship.

It is not easy to describe succinctly such a God's House as the Hanging Church of Babylon. But one can never forget the elements of its dim splendour: the antique swinging lamps with their tiny flames, the golden ikons, the slender outlines of the delicate marble pulpit standing out against the overpowering richness of that dark screen, the low moresco arches outlined with ivory which lead into the sanctuary.

A door on the right admits one to a church as ancient, built into the embrasures of the Roman bastion; this, too, preserves many antique features, but has none of the splendour of Al Mo'allaka.

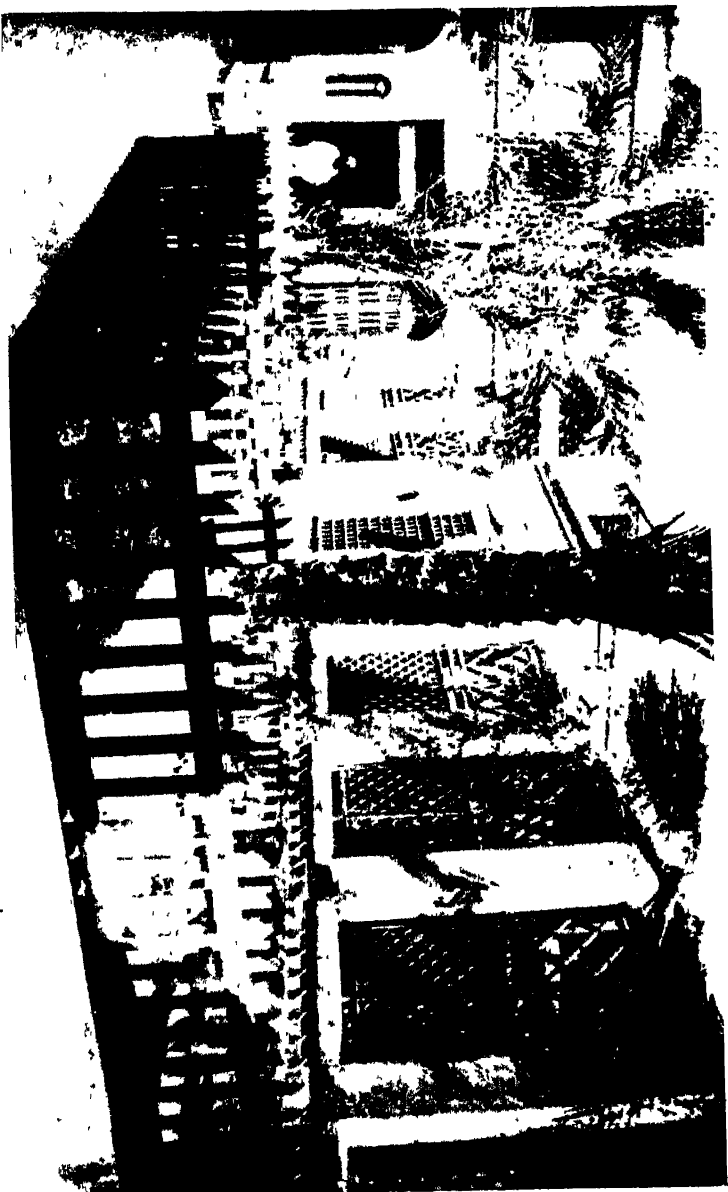
Al Mo'allaka is fortunate in another respect; that it is the only Coptic church of Cairo which has a beautiful and imposing exterior, a clever addition to replace more worthily the old secret entrance.

You enter it now by an octagonal gatehouse which has *mas-tabas* decorated with fine *meshrebiya* work all round its walls inside. This admits into a narrow palm-tree court with a fountain in its centre, separated by an Arab trellis from the garden of the Convent and decorated with ancient Egyptian carved stones. At the end of the court is a handsome sweeping staircase leading up to the doors of the atrium. The atrium is like the courtyard of a Tunisian palace, with walls and pavement of tessellated marbles, and niches with rich blue Oriental tiles. The church opens out of this. It is fortunate that the modern approach should be so in harmony with this ancient and exquisite church, the cleanest—mark that—of all the Coptic churches.

Al Mo'allaka gets its name of the Hanging Church because it was built high up into one of the ancient Roman gateways of the Egyptian Babylon. The gateway, which is one of the finest Roman gateways in existence, was exhumed in 1901. Parts of the church are as old as the third century after Christ, so it is one of the oldest in Christendom. Some of its carvings are now in the British Museum. It is a wonder that the grand old ivory slab, seven feet long and a foot high, covered with little figures, which is one of the glories and mysteries of this ancient church, escaped the rage of the collector.

Next in beauty after Al Mo'allaka comes Abu Sefen, one of a group of churches clustered for defence in one of the little Coptic citadels called *ders*, close to the mosque of Amr. When you have been admitted at the gate of the fortress by one of the family of the Coptic priest, who is as dirty as a beggar, you see in front of you a picture





THE GARDEN OF THE COPTIC CHURCH AT OLD CAIRO CALLED EL NO'VLAKA  
Or the Hanging Church of Baby Ion, which is one of the most beautiful churches in Christendom and dates back to beyond the Mohammedan Conquest of Egypt



THIS PICTURE SHOWS THE BURKA OR FACE-VEIL, WITH THE ODD GILI-BRASS CYLINDER BETWEEN THE EYES; AND THE WAY IN WHICH A CHILD IS CARRIED ASTRIDE ON HIS MOTHER'S SHOULDER—A FAMILIAR SIGHT IN OLD CAIRO.

which reminds you of the sections of old basilicas in handbooks to Roman architecture. This church, like other Coptic churches, never had a front, but they have pulled down the houses which stood in front of it and left the interior open. Under the dry Egyptian skies it does not signify leaving an interior open for the slow Egyptian workman to muddle at. If Abu Sefen was open to inspection in this way it would be most interesting, for Abu Sefen is a basilica as basilicas were in the early days of the Church. But from this example you do not gather much except that the architraves of the early Egyptian Church were made of palm-trunks just split in half and with their furry bark left on.

Abu Sefen is kept locked, and the man who has the key is always away when you ask for him, but once upon a time I was lucky enough to strike one of the architects on the staff of the Wakfs, who are engaged in cataloguing, photographing, conserving, and restoring the monuments of mediæval Egypt. Officially they have charge of Mohammedan religious properties and monuments, but the Coptic monuments and other bits of mediæval Cairo seem to have been lumped in. He overheard the dirty priest telling me that the man who had the only key had gone into Cairo, and told him to unlock the door at once. A key was produced from somewhere in less than a minute; it had probably been in the pocket of the priest's skirt all the time. It does not follow that because a Copt is a Christian, even when he is a minister of Christ, that he should so far forget that he is an Egyptian as to tell the truth. Under that polite German's ægis we revelled in the architecture of Abu Sefen. And here I must interpolate that Coptic churches have screens covered with small pictures of saints very like the ikon-covered screens of the Greek orthodox Church. Abu Sefen had a rich one painted on a gold ground in the Middle Ages, much in the style of the small pictures framed round a central picture of the Madonna, painted in the fifteenth century, before the revival of Antonello, which I saw in Messina some years ago.

Behind this screen is a perfect basilica presbytery, semi-circular in form, with seats rising in tiers like the lecture theatre of a hospital, and fine mosaics on the apse behind. The Christ under the cupola is like the great mosaic Christs of Palermo and Monreale. Abu Sefen has other screens, a fine baldacchin like a Roman basilica, and a beautiful specimen of the octagonal font set in a marble pavement, used for baptism by immersion. The other Coptic churches of old Cairo have mostly deep tanks covered over carelessly with boards, for this ceremony. Baptism plays such a very important part in Coptic religious ceremonials. Here, too, is a lovely old narrow pulpit resting on fifteen marble columns, with panels of mosaics and rare marbles. This church is also very rich in paintings. There are sixty-five very ancient pictures of the saints, bordering the screen round the square in front of the choir. Abu Sefen, the Father of Two Swords, is St. Mercurius. Guide-books have very little to say about this church, which in some ways is the best after the Mo'allaka.

The little church of Sitt' Miriam adjoining is perfect, and it is ancient and characteristic, but it is very dirty and not very beautiful. I shall describe it because it was the first Coptic church we saw, and it is so typical. In the first chamber we entered were two black sheep—the Egyptians love to fatten sheep in incongruous places. The Copts perhaps do not demand that their sacrifices should be without blemish. The second room was surrounded with *mastabas* with very dirty coverings, upon which perhaps the faithful sleep; the third room looked like a mosque with a four-of-hearts design on its matting. It was divided into three parts by screens, the first and second being of rude *meshrebiya*, the third of some hard dark wood inlaid with almond-shaped pieces of bone—a poor specimen of the favourite woodwork of the Copts. It had a row of small pictures of the saints along its top, and a good Byzantine ikon hanging on it. In the chapel to the left of the sanctuary were various old pictures, one of St. Mary suckling the infant Christ. The room corresponding to it on the other side was a sort

of chapel with a square sacramental altar. Behind the screen in the centre was a wooden tabernacle, very like the baldacchin in a Roman basilica. The altars are just block tables, and ostrich eggs were hanging as usual in front of the centre altar. The pulpit was of carved wood and the church had a barrel roof. The font looked like a cross between a well and a Pompeian kitchen. On the other side was the total immersion tank, more dangerous than usual—I nearly fell into it. There was one charming old wooden arch inlaid with ivory and two good old *meshrebiya* seats. In the half-light the church was quite fine and mysterious-looking if you peered through its triple screens. Its fifty feet square carry you back to the earliest times, as do the six old Byzantine columns of the nave. But the entrance is so filthy; the monastery, with frowsy women hanging about, is so squalid; the garden has trees so few and so sickly, and the finest thing about the whole *der* is its gigantically thick door faced with iron and secured with a mighty sliding beam in a low fourth-century arch.

The Copts themselves are much more concerned about Abu Sarga, the Church of St Sergius, than the Mo'allaka. The guides take you straight to the former and do not take you to the latter at all unless you force them to. Abu Sarga is a typical Coptic Church, for you have to dive through a tunnel under a dwelling-house to get to it. Once inside you are amply repaid. It is a charming place, quite unrestored and primitive; its ancient wooden pulpit is entered by a ladder, which is only brought when it is wanted. Here again the church has a wooden architrave supported on antique columns. But the wooden screen of the altar here is perfect. It is of carved dark wood with a pattern of delicately carved ivory mandorla—almond-shaped geometrical patterns. It contains a sort of Roman baldacchin. Inside there is an amphitheatre of shallow steps of inlaid marble, terminating in the inevitable *mikrab* with a spandreed arch of rather pleasing mosaics, behind the tinsel-covered altar under the baldacchin—a lovely unrestored affair.

There is nothing much funnier than to observe a common-

place guide taking a common-place American round a church like Abu Sarga. As guides always expect to get paid more when they produce dirty bits of candle from their pockets and light them, and hold them in front of some obscure detail, they have seized upon that glorious screen of Abu Sarga as a subject. Such a guide and such an American came in while I was studying it. She was the kind of American who cared nothing for Coptic churches or any old churches ; she had only gone there because Bædeker expected it of her, and her township in the United States would examine her when she got back to see that she had got up her lessons properly.

The match was struck, the candle was coaxed into burning up, and held between finger and thumb opposite a tortured Byzantine figure.

*Dragoman.* "Look at that work, madam."

*American.* "I did" (nasal). "Inlaid ivory" (nasal), "and wood" (nasal).

The dragoman, still with his candle, and not in the least disappointed, without any further words led the way down to the crypt.

*American.* "Need we go down there?"

*Dragoman.* "Yes. Biklam, where Jesus Christ was born."

He meant Bethlehem. The American pricked up her ears at the idea of seeing the place where our Lord was born, though she ought to have remembered that the Bible does not lay it in Egypt, and descended.

I followed them down the double descent to a crypt which has good columns in pairs, with romanesque arches above them, but no capitals. At the apse end the columns are replaced by walls which contain niches. It was too crowded to see much, but it seemed to contain a font.

"Come here, Mister," said the dragoman to the American lady. "This is the baptise for Coptic children. No scharge for Copts, so we cannot get near. Joseph has only a little side apsey. Opposite Joseph's residence is a nichey for washing of Jesus Christ."

The idea of the native guide-books is that the Holy Family

took refuge here, and that a little bed was made for our Lord in this niche. As the American lady didn't seem to be quite taking in what he was saying he explained: "This is where whole Holy Family come from Mecca one time."

Even then that crypt was not convincing to the American lady, nor, I may add, to myself.

I reascended to the nave: that, at any rate, was ancient, and holy, and convincing. It had such old, old columns with the usual Coptic architraves of split palm-trees and horse-shoe openings above under a blocked-up gallery with antique marble columns like the gallery of S. Agnese, or the Four Crowned Saints at Rome. Abu Sarga, with its exquisite screens and its atmosphere of antiquity, is a delightful church. But the American could not enjoy it, for she had heard that Coptic churches were full of fleas, and she had been in such an ants' nest of Copts while the guide was insisting on showing her the place of the Nativity. I could have told her something about fleas, in which the church of Abu Sarga is not the most eminent. When I got back that day I had only taken two or three fleas with me, whereas once upon a time going back from the Mo'allaka, I caught twenty-two while I was in the tramway. But I have more to say about that in another chapter.

Sitt' Barbara is just such another church as Abu Sarga, except that it is not quite so large, and has not the reputation of ever having enjoyed attentions from the Holy Family. There are two other old churches in Babylon. They are in *ders* within the Citadel, fortresses within a fortress: they look more like a couple of farmyards. One is called Der Bablun, the other is called Der Todros. Todros sounds as if he ought to have something to do with Uncle Remus, but it is really a corruption of S. Theodore. The church in Der Bablun is dedicated to Sitt' Miriam, meaning the Virgin. Der Todros is the most difficult to get into of all the Coptic churches; you might be creeping through a drain. Both have old features and both have many fleas. It is quite necessary to see them if you are making a study of Coptic churches, and quite unnecessary if you are only a student of the picturesque

Some of the ancient Coptic mansions in Babylon must be almost as interesting as the churches, for they are the accretions of centuries. But who would dare to go into them unless he was protected by an ant-eater that had been taught to catch fleas. For this reason old Cairo is very unexplored. People get wild enthusiasms for it which break off suddenly, like this chapter.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### The Citadel of Cairo

THE Citadel of Cairo was constructed by the order of Saladin, the chivalrous foe of our Richard Cœur de Lion in the Crusades, whose exploits are immortalised in "The Talisman." It was begun in 1166, and its materials were stripped from the smaller pyramids of Gizeh. If stones could see, their eyes would rest on the place from which they were torn, for the Citadel is the eastern horizon from the Pyramids, and the Pyramids sit enthroned on the western horizon from the Citadel.

Within the Citadel, on the site of Mehemet Ali's palace and mosque, rose the stately palace of Saladin, Joseph's Hall, which was blown up in 1824 to make room for the buildings which occupy its place. One cannot say unworthily, because, in spite of all its faults, it is the mosque of Mehemet Ali which confers on the Citadel of Cairo the fairy grace of the sky-line of Stamboul.

The Citadel of Cairo is one of the most imposing objects in my memory. The mosque is only the culmination of a mighty mass of masonry formed by the ramparts, and the two great round towers of Saladin, and the Bab-el-Azab, and the majestic double flight of steps which connect this gate with the Meidan Rumeleh.

It was the closing of the Bab-el-Azab which was the signal for the massacre of the Mamelukes, one of the massacres which made history like the Sicilian Vespers, for it was the annihilating of those turbulent Beys which made the strong rule of Mehemet Ali possible.

The massacre took place on the 1st of March, 1811. Mehemet Ali invited the Mamelukes, 460 in number, to a reception in the Citadel, and, when it was over, suggested that they should ride through the town in state, escorted by his troops. The Mamelukes assented, and proceeded between two lines of the Pasha's troops down the steep and narrow lane, hemmed in between rampart and rock, which leads from the Bab-el-Wastani to the Bab-el-Azab. Suddenly the Bab-el-Azab was closed, and, at this preconcerted signal, the troops who were escorting the Beys fell on them, while others shot them down from above. Only one escaped, and tradition still points out the place where he leapt from the battlements on his horse, and, alighting in safety, galloped off to Syria. But history declares that he arrived too late, and was shut out by that closing of the Bab-el-Azab, which was the signal for the slaughter of all his peers. He did fly to Syria—the ray of truth which generally illuminates a tradition.

The ramparts sweep away to the right and left of the Bab-el-Azab in grand masses, but the eye is riveted by the soaring dome and minarets which crown the brow of the rock. There is an effect, not much less fine in its way, at the back of the Citadel, when, as you lift your eyes from the retreating ramparts, you see in front of you, a mile or less away, the El-Giyûchi mosque, which crowns the lofty Gebel-el-Giyûchi, reached by a causeway that climbs its golden rocks. The Gebel completely dominates the Citadel. Mehemet Ali saw this, and mounted a battery on it, which made the Citadel untenable at once.

Saladin, who chose the site so pictorially magnificent, is said to have been guided by the prosaic fact that meat kept longer on that rock than in any other part of El-Kahira. But the presence of the mighty well of the Pharaohs is more likely to have influenced him. He had other military considerations on his side, for before the days of artillery the Gebel-el-Giyûchi was too distant to dominate this rock, which hung right over the city of the Caliphs. If Egypt had ever been a great military power in the last three centuries, its Sultan would doubtless have connected the Citadel with the

Gebel-el-Giyûchi by containing-walls in which a large army could be accommodated, making the Gebel-el-Giyûchi mosque the keep of the Citadel. Before that, artillery did not signify, or such a stupendous work would have appealed to monarchs like Saladin.

There are three chief ways of entering the Citadel, either by the Bab-el-Gedid, the gate on the hill above the Tombs of the Caliphs, which is now the principal gate, and the only entrance for carriages and guns on the city side, or by the Bab-el-Azab, or by the causeway from El-Giyûchi. The man who took me over the Citadel on my first day in Cairo made me enter by the Bab-el-Gedid gate, because he thought it would impress me more. One certainly gets a side view of the mosque of Mehemet Ali, but there is nothing in that, because the chief value of the mosque is as a horizon effect. Whenever I went to the Citadel again I took care to enter by the Bab-el-Azab : it is so much more interesting to climb the crumbling steps, and pass through that frowning gate, up the steep path walled in with rampart and rock immortalised by the slaughter of the mamelukes. Here, as your path winds up, you have the aspect of an ancient Citadel, and when you suddenly turn into the great square inside the middle gate, the Bab-el-Wastani, I think you make as much of the side-view of the great mosque.

Let us enter it, and have done with it. Its glittering alabaster court is rather fine. Its very size has a certain nobility ; its fountain has a certain fascination. But the interior is deplorable ; it has nothing to recommend it except its height. It is built in bad taste of bad alabaster, and some of that is imitation. Its architect was a Greek renegade. Its lamps are hung on atrocious gilt crinoline hoops. The huge Turkey carpet which covers its floor has a pock-marked effect ; its decorations are in the style of a nineteenth-century hotel. It would be unjust to compare it with the Brighton Pavilion, which is in better taste. The effect of the interior is much inferior to that of the dining-room at the Cataract Hotel at Assuan. The coloured-glass windows are appalling ; the painting of the dome and the upper parts, including the

gilt foolscap pulpit, is almost worse. This is Mehemet Ali's punishment for massacring the Mamelukes just below, and the punishment is almost more than he can bear.

But fortunately having seen the interior once, one never enters it again, while the majestic outlines of its exterior on the Citadel rock cheer the eye from Memphis to Gizeh and Gizeh to Heliopolis.

Around it is a scene of woe. First there is the En-Nasir mosque, a shell whose stately courts, built by Ibn Kalaûn's prodigal son, have been stripped of their decorations for museums, but whose architecture is so fine that Max Hertz Bey could restore it into a noble monument with his sure hand. Its antique courtyards, arched in the fourteenth century, make a fine contrast against the minarets and clustered domes of Mehemet Ali's mosque. Its own minarets, gleaming with old green tiles, are among the gems of the Citadel—lovely old woodwork inscriptions are still left where the fallen dome once sprang from the great *liwân*. The *liwân* still has its graces, for some colour remains on the coffers of the roof, and there are three rows of black-and-white arches rising in tiers, though the *mihrab* and pulpit have disappeared. The main court has its arches and its clerestory and its zigzag Arab battlements complete; very noble are some of the columns of the royal mosque, which only a century ago was the crown of the Citadel, as Mehemet Ali's mosque is now.

On the other side of Mehemet Ali's mosque is the deserted palace of the Khedives, in which the commander of the British Artillery has his headquarters and could, if he chose, have his residence; but its vast and not unpleasing rooms in the nineteenth-century Oriental-palace style would cost so much to restore and so much to keep up.

Beyond are the remains of the palace of Saladin, which in their utter ruin show the nobility of his conception by the tremendous masonry of the fragments. The views from the garden and the office of the C.R.A. are the finest in Cairo. The windows command a view of the fantastic tombs of the Mamelukes and the Mokhattam hills, with

their ancient mosques, and afford glimpses of the desert, the Nile, old Cairo, and the mounds of Fustat. The view from the garden and from the windows on that side is the same as that which all visitors go to see from the terrace of the mosque of Mehemet Ali, for here at one's feet is ancient Cairo, with its hundred minarets, severed by the gleaming belt of the Nile from the golden hem of the sunset, with the Pyramids rising up from it in royal purple. And day after day the sunset is a pageant here.

Few visitors, as they stand upon the terrace apostrophising, pay enough heed to the spectacle at their feet, for down below the battlements on which they stand is the Meidan Rumeleh, bounded by the vast fabric of the mosque of Sultan Hassan and the mosque of the Rifai'ya sect and the little old mosques on the shoulder of the Citadel hill. In the forest of minarets beyond them it is easy to pick out the old tower-like minarets of Ibn Tulun's mosque at one end and El-Hakim at the other, the two oldest mosques in the city, while in the centre are the lofty and fantastic minarets which rise from the Bab-es-Zuweyla and El-Azhar, the chief University of Islam. In between the minarets the flat roofs of the old houses have their Biblical outline broken by dark little gardens—mere courts filled with cypress and palm, for the ladies of the harem, and away on the left are the long-drawn arches of Saladin's aqueduct looking like a work of Imperial Rome.

The Citadel of Cairo abounds in ancient remains. How much of the ramparts may be ascribed to the famous and knightly Saladin history has not yet established. If there are no great remains of his actual masonry it is because, for military reasons, the fortifications have had to be repaired and strengthened. There are large portions of the walls in the style of his day, which was the inspiration of the Edwardian castles of England, but it is always difficult to tell the age of Saracenic architecture, because its builders were conservative in their ideas and admirable copyists.

Most authorities are willing to allow Saladin the honour of giving its picturesque form to Joseph's Well. Joseph the son

of Jacob was of course a great man in Egypt: his reputation in the traditions of the country is fully equal to his Bible reputation. He is credited with having drained the Fayyum and cut the Bahr-el-Yussuf, which scientists have pronounced to be really a backwater of the Nile. But history says that he is not the Joseph of the Joseph's Well in the Citadel of Cairo, since Saladin also—and it seems rather prosaic for him—bore the name of Joseph, which is still very popular in Egypt.

But it is not chronologically impossible for the Joseph of the Bible to have been the Joseph of this well, for archæologists think that the well may date from Pharaonic times, since there was an ancient Egyptian town, which Mr. H. R. Hall calls Khri Ahu, on the site of the modern city.

Joseph's Well is an astonishing piece of construction. The easiest way to conceive it is to imagine the fallen campanile at Venice carried three hundred feet down into the earth instead of up into the air; for the ascent of the later and the descent of the former are on the same principle. A ramp, carried round and round spirally, replaces the usual staircase. Only here the ramp has steps cut in it in places, and the upper portion, which is all that can be seen, is perfectly empty and open to the sky; the lower half, which had become unsafe, has now been closed. It could never be properly seen. One of the most curious features of the well is that it is not in one direct vertical line. A hundred and sixty feet down the shaft takes a sharp bend to the left of about its own width. This is why it was worked by two sakiyas—one at the top and one half way down. It is capable of supplying the entire garrison with water, but since the waterworks have been laid, the Citadel has been supplied by them. The ramp is lighted by windows, cut through to the central shaft, which show that the layer of stone left between the ramp and the shaft is in some places no thicker than a door. The well is 290 feet deep, and is supposed to go back at any rate to Roman times, though the ramp may have been constructed by Saladin's orders. The gem of the Citadel is the little mosque known as Sultan Selim's, dating from the sixteenth century, which

stands behind the hospital. This is one of the most beautiful mosques in all Cairo ; it has such charming faded paintings, such elegant arabesques. Its white marble pulpit is graciously fretted, and it is lined throughout with fine marble panelling in the style of Arabo-Norman churches, and there is also a painted gallery like a Tuscan music gallery and a fine black-and-white Arabic inscription running all round it. The *mihrab* has rather charming mosaics ; its panels are decorated with porphyry and serpentine ; there are ancient bronze candlesticks a yard high, which have been richly gilt and bear inscriptions, standing on the floor. I think this mosque distinctly more beautiful than the much-talked-of Bordeini mosque ; it is so cool, so gracious , one of the nicest mosques we saw in Cairo.

At the back of it is a charming little white-domed Turkish cloister, with the same marble panelling round its walls, and a marble pavement, fast breaking up, like that of St. Mark's at Venice. You enter it by a good marble portal. There are also a fountain court with one of the handsome Arab trellises round the fountain and other courts and a tomb and a queer little garden.

The Citadel presents the strangest contrasts : on the one hand we have noble mediæval monuments like the walls of Saladin, the En-Nasir mosque, and the El-Giyûchi mosque enthroned on the height above. The El-Azab gate, identified with the romance of the Massacre of the Mamelukes, though not of the same antiquity, is completely Oriental. On the other hand, the Citadel is a fortress garrisoned by British soldiers. You hear British bugles, British drums, British words of command ; you see Tommy Atkins doing sentry-go, little bits of drill in progress, the officers in their breeches and boots returning from polo, the men in quite decent flannels with racquets in their hands going off to play tennis, or maybe a little knot of ladies going to afternoon tea with some officer in the Infantry Regiment or the Royal Artillery, the descendants of Richard Cœur de Lion in the Citadel of Saladin.

## CHAPTER XIX

### Concerning the Tombs of the Caliphs and the Mamelukes ; and Mohammedan Funerals

THERE are certain spots in the world so beautiful that, to use the touching old Bible phrase, your heart leaps within you when you behold them. Of such are the Piazzetta between St. Mark's and the Doge's Palace at Venice ; the Forum of Rome, or the Acropolis of Athens at sunset ; the Hall of the Giants at Karnak by moonlight ; or dawn in the Rocky Mountains. And hardly any of them displays the quality of pure beauty to a higher degree than the Tombs of the Caliphs at Cairo.

The first morning that I stepped out into the Street of the Camel at Cairo a vendor of postcards dazzled me with a picture of a gorgeous and fantastic mosque, with its noble flight of steps hung with rich carpets. It was grand enough, antique enough, Oriental enough for Saladin and his Court. And the colour of the atmosphere in which it was bathed was incredible. I looked at the inscription idly, *Tombe des Califes*. I put it aside as sheer exaggeration and never gave it another thought till months afterwards, when I had visited Khartûm and had lingered long among the marvellous tombs and temples of the Pharaohs at Thebes and Karnak. Then a soldier friend who had come down with us from Khartûm, wishing to have a sort of picnic with us, suggested that we should take donkeys and ride out to the Tombs of the Caliphs.

In Cairo foreigners do not ride donkeys nowadays, and officers in uniform are not allowed to ride them inside the



city walls, though officers in uniform seldom move an inch without a donkey at Khartûm except when they are on duty or on horseback. A man who keeps several chargers generally has a black or white donkey as well for going to balls and garden parties and other odd jobs. You can leave a donkey so much more unceremoniously than a horse.

Donkey riding is the best way of going to the Tombs of the Caliphs for those who are too idle to walk the mile or so between the first and last tomb, and you can always get donkeys in the square under the Citadel where the trams stop.

But if you can manage a little exertion, the way to see the Tombs of the Caliphs to the best advantage is to drive down the Musky in a cab and dismiss it at the gate opposite the Windmill Hills, at sunset. There is a level footpath which winds between the hills. Do not take that, but climb the highest, and do not look before you till you get right to the top. Then lift up your eyes and you will see as beautiful a spectacle as there is to be seen in the whole world. I shall never forget the first time I saw it. That postcard, instead of seeming an exaggeration, fell pitifully short of the unearthly splendour of that long line of ancient and fantastic mosques illuminated by the deep glare of the Egyptian sunset. Instead of being hung with mere carpets from old Oriental looms, behind each mosque was a flashing veil which seemed to be woven of threads drawn out from rubies. Every inch of masonry, every foot of the desert was tinged with the richest hues in God's paintbox. The desert sand and the sandstone of the mosques seem to inhale the splendour and breathe it forth again.

I did not pay my sunset visit to the tombs till after the first long ride through them in the heat of a Cairo morning; but to take in their magic you should pay the sunset visit first and drink in your full of the spectacle, without heeding that the swift-falling Egyptian darkness will not give you time to visit the tombs individually; that can be done on another day.

Individually, indeed, they sacrifice some of the charm. The tomb mosque of Kait Bey out in the desert, admirably restored, like his city mosque, is the best of all mosques in Egypt to photograph. It is wonderfully beautiful; its dome laced with arabesques is almost incomparable; it is approached by a noble flight of steps; its *loggia* is a monument of antique grace, and its minaret is chaste and fine and royal. So many hundred yards away the great tomb-mosque of Sultan Barkuk is falling into sentimental decay, and has its imposing fortress-like form flanked with charming and fantastic arcades. Further on still are the mosques of other fifteenth-century Sultans, deserted, locked up, almost Gothic in their habilliments.

But to get to these miracles of the dead Art of the Middle Ages from the Citadel one has to pass through an unseemly village of ghouls, who live among the dead in poor little houses and callous commonness, to make what living they can, I suppose, by sextoning and keeping unclean things from tombs, and guiding visitors, or selling melons and other native delicacies to the Arabs whose business or fancy takes them to the cemetery of the Caliphs. This squalid village extends its soiled arms almost to the threshold of the grandeur of Kait Bey's Palace of the Dead.

I suppose it must be so: in Egypt squalor always waits on ancient State.

To examine the tombs one must approach them on foot, donkey, or carriage from the Citadel. There are so many that one cannot examine them all; but Kait Bey's must be visited as the most perfect and the most beautiful; El-Azraf's for the charming decoration of its rather church-like interior, and to wander through the vast ruins of the college and the almshouses which surround it, and formed one of the most celebrated institutions of their time; and Sultan Barkuk's because it forms a fine mosque of the open-air type which has one side of its colonnade deepened into a *liwān*. It has, too, a fine tomb-chamber with an imposing array of tombs, and its exterior is of a noble and uncommon type, suggestive of one of the great square mediæval castles of

Italy. Still farther on visit the last great group of mosques ; there are three of them in it, the tomb of the Sultan El-Ghury, and the funerary mosques of Sultan Inal and the Emir Kebir, though they seem to form one great red building, which looks almost like a Gothic monastery with its beautiful pointed arches. The door to this group is always locked, but it does not signify, for there is a breach in the wall at the back through which you can enter them. There is something church-like even in the interior. This is not surprising. there is no doubt that mosque architecture and church architecture reacted upon each other on the shores of the Mediterranean, where the intercourse between Christian and Saracen was constant. In Tunis the oldest mosques have most of them actually been churches, and look none the less mosque-like. In Palermo there are old churches so like mosques—San Giovanni degli Eremiti, the Martorana, and San Cataldo among them—that half the people in the city believe them to have been built as mosques, though archives prove that they were built for the Norman kings.

There are other charming tomb-mosques and *zawiyas*, perhaps a score of them, well worthy to be examined or kodaked. But it would be idle to recapitulate them, and indeed it is not easy to fit their names to them, because the guides can identify only four or five of them.

The Tombs of the Caliphs have a double charm ; their intrinsic beauty is rivalled by the matchless beauty of their setting as they stretch along the rim of Cairo's eastern desert. I have noted elsewhere the fact that the Moslems, ever looking to Mecca, choose the desert on the Mecca side for their tombs as they choose the eastern wall of their mosques for their *mihlabs*. While the Egypt of the Pharaohs, with its belief of Osiris dying daily in the west, put its dead under the earth in the western desert for their passage in the Soul Boat.

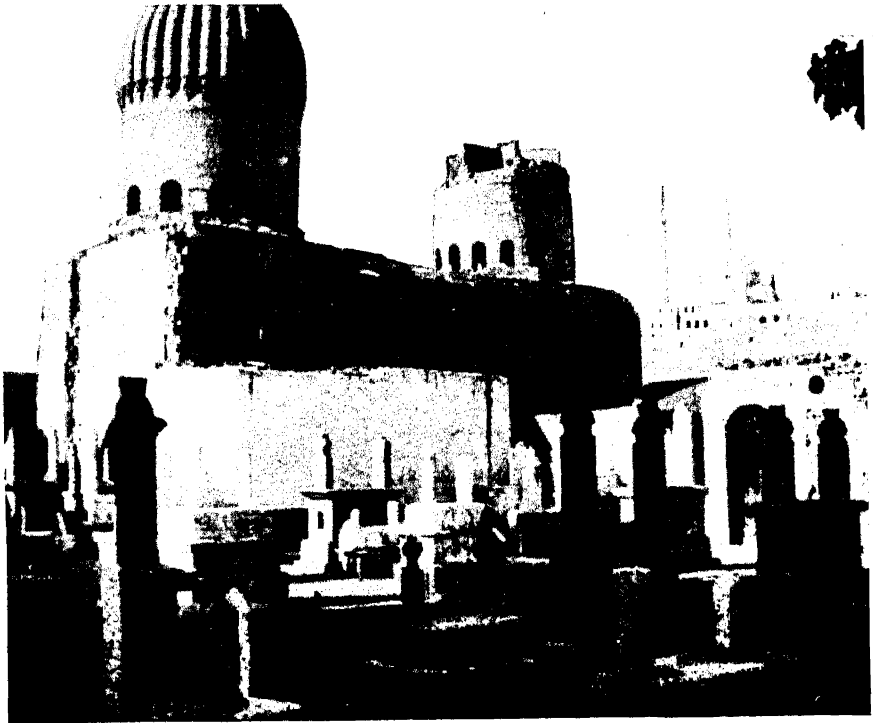
The Tombs of the Mamelukes are, as I have said, not equal to those of the Caliphs, and their immediate setting is not so picturesque, for they are entangled in a humble part of the city. But viewed from above, as for example the windows

of the palace of the Khedives on the Citadel, they are strikingly beautiful, for they stretch a long finger into the desert under the shadow of the rocky Mokattams, whose skyline is broken once, twice, by ancient ruins, and beyond them you can see both the western and the eastern desert with the steely ribbon of the Nile between.

The kodaker will find both the Tombs of the Caliphs and the Tombs of the Mamelukes paradises, for they are full of fantastic buildings in unbroken sunshine, and he can generally secure a clean background of desert. And this is, oh, so important in Egypt, where the strength of the light and the clearness of the atmosphere frequently make an object which is a good distance off, come right behind and clash with the object he is photographing.

And here perhaps I ought to say something about Mohammedan funerals. Their prime feature is that there is never any hearse. The body is invariably carried upon a bier. In theory the bier is always borne by the friends of the deceased, who acquire merit by performing so pious an office. It is a plain wooden affair, shaped like a coffin, with a high horn at one end, on which the turban is sometimes hung. The bier is nearly always covered, including the horn, with a rich cashmere shawl as a pall. The women of the family are allowed to accompany it if they wish, but the women who wail round it are generally hired mourners. The procession is sometimes limited to a few friends, who surround the bier, taking turns in carrying it. It is generally headed by banners, and its presence becomes known before it is seen by the noble and dignified chanting.

In my novel, "The Tragedy of the Pyramids," I give a description of the funeral of the Descendant of the Prophet with all the ancient ceremonies, using Lane's inimitable translations of the words of the prayers. One hardly ever sees such a funeral nowadays, although many thousands of people attend the funeral of a popular hero, and the whole route is lined with crowds, who make demonstrations of grief, which are striking and picturesque when they are delivered by men with flowing beards and Oriental robes, but seem extravagant,



THE TOMBS OF THE MAMELUKES.

In the background are a tomb mosque and the great mosque of Mehemet Ali on the Citadel. In front are various types of Moslem altar-tombs.



A MOHAMMEDAN FUNERAL.

and even childish, when they come from Effendis in European clothes with *tarbushes*. The one thing which dignifies the proceeding is their unmistakable sincerity and anguish. I will not describe such a scene, but I venture to quote my description of the funeral of Hoseyn Hassan, to show what Mohammedan funerals were like in the great old days

"First came four camels bearing bread and water to be distributed to the poor at the tomb; then came the *Yemeniyeh*—twelve blind men, who chanted without ceasing in sorrowful tones: 'There is no deity but God; Mohammed is God's Apostle; God favour and preserve him.'

"There were no male relations. Hoseyn Hassan was the last of his race; his children were only girls of tender years. But he had friends innumerable—devoted personal friends, as well as colleagues like Mulazim Bey and Ahmed Mahdi. Then came the public officials—the grand Kadi and the Grand Mufti in their robes of state; and the Sheikh and all the *Ulemas* of El-Azhar in their purple; and many other learned and devout men, who were followed by four groups of *fikees*, chanting different *soorats* from the Koran, and *munshids* chanting the *Burdeh*, the celebrated poem in honour of Mohammed, the dead man's ancestor. Then, with their resplendent banners half-furled, and raising strange chants came representatives of all the Dervish Orders in Cairo, followed by schoolboys, one of them bearing a Koran on a cushion, and all of them chanting the 'Hashriyeh,' the song of the Day of Judgment, which begins:

"'The Perfection of Him who hath created whatever hath form;  
And subdued His servants by death:  
Who bringeth to nought His creatures, with mankind:  
They shall all lie in the graves:  
The Perfection of the Lord of the east:  
The Perfection of the Lord of the west:  
The Perfection of the illuminator of the two lights;  
The sun, to wit, and the moon:  
His Perfection: how bountiful is He!  
His Perfection: how clement is He!  
His Perfection: how great is He!  
When a servant rebelleth against Him He protecteth.'

"Then came the body of Hoseyn Hassan. A mere merchant would have had his bier covered with a rich cashmere shawl. But it was the tradition for the descendants of the Prophet to be carried to their burial on a plain wooden bier, decorated only with the sacred green turban. Each few yards of the journey its bearers were changed; not only did every one in the procession, from the Grand Kadi, who stands next to the Khedive, to the poorest *fellah*, or porter, take his share in bearing the sacred burden; but for the whole eight miles the bystanders pressed forward to gain the merit of having borne so holy a person.

"Behind the bier walked the female mourners, a sad spectacle, for not one of them was distinguished by the fillet of blue cotton, which marks the relatives of the deceased, though among them were those who had been his wives till he divorced them to woo the American. As the late Sheikh was so holy a personage, it was forbidden for these bereft women to mourn; they had to rend the air with the shrill and quavering cries of joy, called *Zaghareet*.

"Last came the buffalo which was to be sacrificed at the grave, and the carriages of the dignitaries who were walking in the procession.

"The *neddabehs*, as they tore their hair and rent their garments and threw dust upon their heads, and beat their tambourines, uttered loud cries of 'O my Master!' 'O my Camel!' 'O my Lion!' 'O my Glory!' 'O my Resource!' 'O my Father!' 'O my Misfortune!' . . . The effect of this multi-coloured, unarmed army marching at mourners' pace past the irresponsive Pyramids, was indescribably grand. And as the melancholy cortège pursued its slow way under the long avenue into Cairo, and through the Cairo streets, its route was lined with ever-thickening crowds, all showing hopeless grief in the ancient forms of the Orient. . . .

"The funeral service in El-Azhar was as pathetic as the death of a nation. The bier was borne into the vast and dimly lighted *liwân*, and laid in front of the *mihrab*, with the right side of the dead in the direction of Mecca. The



Sheikh-ul-Azhar stood behind it with his hands raised to his head. 'God is most great!' he cried, and recited the opening chapter of the Koran. Then he cried again: 'God is most great!' and prayed aloud, 'O God, favour our Lord Mohammed, the Illiterate Prophet and his Family and Companions, and preserve them!'

"A third time he cried: 'God is most great!' And said: 'O God, verily this is Thy servant and son of Thy servant; he hath departed from the repose of the world, and from its amplitude, and from whatever he loved, and from those by whom he was loved in it, to the darkness of the grave, and to what he experienceth. He did testify that there is no deity but Thou alone: that Thou hast no companion; and that Mohammed is Thy servant and Thine apostle; and Thou art all-knowing respecting him. O God, he hath gone to abide with Thee; and Thou art the best with whom to abide. He hath become in need of Thy mercy; and Thou hast no need of his punishment. We have come to Thee, supplicating that we may intercede for him. O God, if he were a doer of good, over-reckon his good deeds; and if he were an evil-doer, pass over his evil doings; and of Thy mercy grant that he may experience Thine acceptance; and spare him the trial of the grave, and its torment; and make his grave wide to him; and keep back the earth from his sides; and of Thy mercy grant that he may experience security from Thy torment, until Thou send him safely to Thy paradise, O Thou most merciful of those who show mercy!' Then, for the fourth and last time, the Sheikh-ul-Azhar cried: 'God is most great!' adding: 'O God, deny us not our reward for him, and lead us not into trial after him: pardon us and him and all the Moslems, O Lord of all creatures!' Thus he finished his prayer, greeting the angels on his right and left with the salutation of 'Peace be on you, and the mercy of God.' And then addressing the friends and dignitaries present, he said: 'Give your testimony respecting him.' And they replied: 'He was of the virtuous.'

"Then the bier was taken up and placed by the Tomb

of the Saint of El-Azhar, while the *fikees* once more recited the opening chapter of the Koran, and the passage in the second chapter beginning: 'Whatever is in heaven and on earth is God's.'

"While the service was proceeding in the *lwān* the shades of night had fallen, and torches were brought into the great court of the mosque from all the surrounding streets and markets. When the bier was carried out into it, it looked almost unearthly in the glare of the torches which filled it, with its six wild minarets and innumerable arches. The great procession re-formed, and swept down the street of Es-Sharwani, and round to the Bab-el-Ghoraib, where the road to the Tombs of the Caliphs runs through the low hills outside the eastern wall.

"The moon had now risen, and showed these hills to be black, white, and blue with the masses of human beings, the frequency of black showing that it was here, where the slope let them see over the heads of those in front, that the women had gathered. As the cortège emerged from the city with its torches and banners and bread-camels, the cries of the people on the hills ascended with the smoke to the deep-blue, million-eyed skies of Egypt: 'O my Father!' 'O my Lion!' 'O my Misfortune!' till the volume of sound seemed to smite the stars.

"And so the procession passed, winding between the hills, then threading its way through the City of the Dead, till it came, at the edge of the desert, to the Mosque of the Descendants of the Prophet.

"The grave was ready for them. At the spot where Hoseyn Hassan had indicated to Lucrece on that afternoon of trouble, the earth had been removed by a score of willing hands, revealing a plain vaulted chamber with a little square cell in front of it. It was a tomb that had never been used, specially prepared for the Sheikh when his time should come.

"The grave-digger and his assistants lifted the holy body down into the tomb, and turned it on its right side, facing Mecca, supporting it in its position with new unbaked bricks.

Then the precious cashmere shawl, in which the body was wrapped, was rent in twain, and a little earth was gently placed upon the corpse by the dignitaries, as there were no relations, and the Instructor of the Dead began his solemn address :

“ ‘ O servant of God ! O son of a handmaid of God ! know that at this time there will come down to thee two angels commissioned respecting thee, and the like of thee. When they say to thee, “ Who is thy Lord ? ” answer them, “ God is my Lord,” in truth ; and when they ask thee concerning thy Prophet, or the man who hath been sent unto you, say to them, “ Mohammed is the Apostle of God,” with veracity, and when they ask thee concerning thy religion, say to them, “ El-Islam is my religion ” ; and when they ask thee concerning thy book of direction, say to them, “ The Koran is my book of direction, and the Moslems are my brothers ” ; and when they ask thee concerning thy Kibleh, say to them, “ The Kaabeh is my Kibleh ; and I have lived and died in the assertion that there is no deity but God, and Mohammed is God’s apostle ” ; and they will say, “ Sleep, O servant of God, in the protection of God.” ’ ”

“ And then the buffalo was sacrificed, and its flesh, with the camel-loads of bread and water, was distributed to the poor sitting in the dust with dust upon their heads.

“ And then the body of Hoseyn Hassan, the Descendant of the Prophet, was left for the visit of the Angels Nakir and Nekir, to whom he would have to account for his actions.”

Probably there is no one alive in Egypt to-day who would receive such a funeral if he died ; but some features of it are preserved in every Moslem funeral that you see winding its way through the Arab city

Except for the presence of the Cross, Coptic funerals are very like those of Moslems.

I once had the opportunity of seeing the funeral of a rich Jew, more magnificent than any funeral I ever saw, except the procession of a dead monarch or a national hero. I will not describe it in detail. Everything about it was not only sumptuous but in charming taste, from the little boys chosen

for their beauty, dressed in purple velvet edged with gold, who carried the tapers at the head of the procession, each with a white band of mourning on his arm, to the hearse itself, drawn by six white horses, with nodding white ostrich feathers on their heads, and white caparisons of silk and velvet, as rich as those of knights in tournaments.

The hearse was covered with magnificent white ribbons and flowers, and the coachman's livery and hammercloth were of rich white, but some odd freak—inobservance perhaps—had entrusted the driving of this milk-white hearse to a jet-black coachman.

## CHAPTER XX

### The Birthday of the Prophet

**B**Y far the best of the Mohammedan festivals we saw in Cairo, better even than the return of the Mahmal and the Pilgrims from Mecca, was the Molid-en-Nebbi—the Birthday of the Prophet.

For some days all the Arabs had been in a ferment. I asked them what was in the air. They told me "The birthday of the Prophet," but, Arab-like, they did not know on what exact day it would happen. The only means by which I could find it out was by inquiring on what day all the public offices in Cairo were to have their holiday.

For about a week before, booths were erected in the principal thoroughfares, especially on the road to Abbassiya, in which, in spite of the admonitions in the Koran against making images of living things, they sold figures, in red and white sugar and jelly: here an elephant, there a camel, there the old hero Ibrahīm Pasha on his charger; and absurd sugar dolls dressed in paper. The booths had special decorations, but I could not discover their significance. When the day came the editor of the principal native paper came to drive us to the Molid, for he had procured an invitation for us from the Sheikh-el-Bekri, the nearest descendant of the Prophet in all Egypt.

The festival of the Molid takes place on the waste plains of Abbassiya, which serve as a kind of Campus Martius for military reviews and occasions like the present. In the two or three miles' drive which separate it from Cairo I

noticed hardly anything out of the common except the great crowd, the sweet stalls, and, in one place, in the garden of a café, a pavilion made of four great cloths stamped or painted with scenes of the extraordinary religious life of the Persians.

Presently the long line of blocked tramcars showed us that the plot was thickening, and when we suddenly swept round them we came upon an extraordinary spectacle—a vast rectangular space, about the size of the Stadium, surrounded by enormous pavilions brodered with the most brilliant specimens of the tentmaker's art. Some of them must have been a hundred feet long and fifty feet high; their fronts were open, the flaps being turned up like the starched flaps of a French nun's coif, flinging to the sunshine and the breezes the gleam of the red and blue and gold in which the texts from the Koran were emblazoned on them.

Across the open fronts were festooned loop below loop, scores of the great lamps, stored for the festivals of Islam in the halls of the old El-Hakim mosque, which once did duty for the museum of Arabic treasures. Across, and in between them, fluttered more festoons of the gay little white and vermilion emblems which are hung across a street to proclaim a marriage of the Faithful, or the return of a pilgrim from Mecca.

Inside these pavilions were rich deep carpets and scores of easy chairs, with here and there one of the little brass and silver *kārsi*, the tables of mediæval workmanship shaped like a Roman altar which are the pride of the collector. All was richness, colour, hospitality. Dignified Arabs in their gayest robes were standing or wandering about, with the airs of expectation breaking through the stolid calm of the Orient. From unseen quarters came the clash of barbaric music. Excited police galloped hither and thither on their beautiful white Arabs, waving back the traffic; they told us magnificently that we could proceed no farther; but when our editor mentioned the magic name of the Sheikh-el-Bekri, we were escorted, with something approaching to humility, to the finest of all the pavilions, coloured

a rich green. Was it not the tent of the Descendant and Representative of the Prophet? Beside it, all the other great pavilions belonging to the Ministers of the Khedive and the various Mohammedan Orders were as nothing.

The Sheikh came forward to receive us, a small, thin, white-faced man, who looked an ascetic and a student in his plain black gown. His turban was, of course, of the sacred green. When he rose to meet us he had the Prime Minister sitting beside him, and on either side of them were the Sheikh-ul-Azhar and the Grand Mufti. A little lower down was the Governor of Cairo. The posts of our grand green tent were red.

The Sheikh has nearly every distinction, open to a non-military subject, of the Turkish Empire. He has the highest order of the Osmaniya and the Sultan's new Order; he is head of all the religious bodies of Islam in Egypt; he is Sherif of the Asraf, the relations of the Prophet, but his son, if he has one, will be a far holier personage than himself, for the Sheikh married a daughter of the late Sheikh Sadat, who was much nearer the Prophet in descent.

Presently the brother of the Khedive drove up with an escort of Lancers on grey horses. He was offered a penny cup of coffee in a shabby cup on a shabby tray by a shabby man, and a glass of water, just as we had been. The contrast between the Sheikh, with his ascetic face, which might have been worn by fasting, and his moth-eaten beard and severe black gown, and the handsome, plump Prince, a European in face and in dress, except for the *tarbush* of his country, was striking. The gilt easy chairs in our pavilion were covered with pink satin for the Prince and the Ministers and the Mohammedan magnificoes, and with green plush for the rest of the Sheikh's guests. Magnificent crystal chandeliers hung down from the lofty roof; festoons of red and white electric lights were looped all round it. The tum-tuming of drums from various points kept us in a flutter of excitement.

I noted that the police, who had been so ready to stop a carriage of Christians, took no notice of the bakers with

large rings of bread slung round their arms, the native omnibuses, the water-sellers, and the Mohammedan crowd generally. Relays of men with water-skins came up and splashed their water over the sand in front of our tent like human water-carts. I noted also that for this great festival of the Prophet, the presumably Mohammedan police were commanded by Christian officers.

As soon as the Royal Highness was seated, the heads of the various Moslem Orders came to receive tokens from the Sheikh-el-Bekri. They were escorted, each of them, by a highly picturesque procession. The custom is not a very old one, nor is there any sanctity attached to the present site. Until recently the Molid was held at the Kasr-el-Aini.

The daylight reception of the great Moslem Orders is not universal in Moslem countries. In Syria they only have the illumination by night. I was thankful that they have both in Egypt, because this was a magnificent sight. The droning on the drums, the tinkle of cymbals drew nearer, and soon we learned what they betokened. For three functionaries in green turbans stepped to the front and, heralded by the barbaric band we had heard approaching, and escorted with tall green banners resplendent with texts and designs in red and yellow and white—the mottoes of the Order, the deputation of the first great Order arrived, raising the weird chant from the Koran which makes a Moslem funeral so impressive. We could catch the Allah-Allah which came so frequently, and the sun, which had been behind the clouds until this, streamed down on the glittering brass-work of the heads of the flagstuffs. In the middle of the procession on a magnificent Arab horse, saddled with leopard-skin, rode the Sheikh of the Order in flowing and venerable white robes. He dismounted to make the formal declaration to the Sheikh-el-Bekri, and the deputation made grave and profound Oriental salaams with a breathless chant of Oh, salaam! Oh, salaam! Everything was most dignified until the salutation was finished. Then the magnificent lack of perception of the fitness of things, which is the weak point in the Arab mind, asserted itself. There was no dignified routine plan for getting this proces-





THE BIRTHDAY OF THE PROPHET.

A deputation of one of the Mohammedan Orders on its way from saluting the Sheikh-el-Bekri



THE BIRTHDAY OF THE PRINCE OF WALES. The Prince of Wales and his family on the deck of the ship.

sion away to make room for the next, so the police almost hustled its members off. The second procession was particularly fine. Its banner-bearers were all in white, with Moslem green sashes, and there were a number of pilgrims home from Mecca, waving censers and singing their solemn chant. The musicians, who led the way, held their tambourines high in the air and danced like David in the familiar picture. The Sheikh-el-Bekri himself stood up to honour them—he had remained sitting while the first procession passed; there was quite a litany of chanting, and more white-robed attendants with green belts and shoulder-sashes played weird tunes on weird bagpipes. There were hundreds of banners by this time fluttering round the square.

More processions followed. Each halted in front of our tent, and droned with its drums or its bagpipes. Only a little thin tune came from the pipes; but as there were bands all round the square the effect was indescribably impressive. Sometimes the head of a deputation began to recite as it halted. One was a very old man, in blue robes, quite blind. Many of the processions walked up hand-in-hand with the simplicity of children; some came with a loud beating of Nubian drums; all chanted incessantly. As procession after procession came up, each with a fleet of banners and waving incense from quaint censers, I slipped out from the tent and, taking my position with the sun behind me, took photograph after photograph. As I was stepping out with my camera, our editor, who had taken us, warned me to be very careful not to be seen. He said that although Egyptian Arabs were not ordinarily fanatical, they might resent it very much on such a holy occasion. I do not think that he had taken many photographs, certainly not as many as I had of Egyptian Moslems. I anticipated no trouble with them, but I thought that the police might be troublesome, and that it was not improbable that I should have to use the fact that we were guests of the Sheikh-el-Bekri to get over their scruples. I picked out the officer in command, used my argument, and requested him to select a good position for me to photograph from. He said to me impatiently, "I can't speak English," and

added something in Italian. I replied, "That won't help you, for I can speak Italian." And I repeated what I had said in his own language. He at once became all smiles. "So few Englishmen who come here speak my language," he said. "Stand where you like, and I'll move up beside you!"

At first I rather shielded myself behind his horse and took my pictures with as much appearance of inadvertence as possible, but I was cured of that when the men from a procession, which had already passed, came back to know if I would not photograph their procession also. My commandant translated for me. I secured some photographs which I value very much. It took me right back to the Crusades to see these hundreds, and I suppose thousands, of splendid banners sweeping round the great square with such barbaric music, and chanting which seemed to carry the name of Allah right up to heaven.

I should have felt profoundly affected, if it had not been for the little interludes of comedy, as when a baker carrying a Greek laundry-basket full of bread-rings, or a Greek lady in her Sunday best of flaming silk and white kid, or a performing troupe with snakes or monkeys cut in between two processions.

I took my photographs as quickly as possible, and sped back to the Prophet's tent, where the notables of Egypt, the great Riaz Pasha among them by this time, sat with a background of tall *kürsi*, tables inlaid with pearl, and superb crystal chandeliers. I made my way to my editor to tell him of my good fortune. "I should not have believed it," he said. He explained to me that these guilds, who were filling the square with the text-broidered banners of Islam, were half religious, half civil; that they were generally Sufists who had taken a certain text or a certain sentence to follow. Their banners were simply wonderful; they were so enormous, so gloriously gay with brass-work and inscriptions and arabesques in red, yellow, green, and black. But some of the men who carried the banners reminded me of the tag-rag and bob-tail, who put on the livery and carried the insignia of a Chinese Taotai or city Governor, when he was going to

pay a visit of state, in my Far-Eastern days. Evidently the supply of handy men from the bazars had been severely taxed by the innumerable banners that had to be borne. But some of the processions had brought their own bearers, dignified-looking men, with the enthusiasm of religion distinguishing them as much as their white robes with sashes of the Prophet's green. It was a lesson in deportment to see an important Arab walk straight down the middle of the space in front of our tent, exchanging salutes with the Pashas and Sheikhs, on his way to address the Sheikh-el-Bekri, or the brother of his Sovereign.

Our editor translated for me a very amusing conversation which was taking place between one of the Khedive's Ministers, representing Liberal thought more or less, and one of the religious dignitaries representing the hide-bound prejudices of Islam. The dignitary was protesting against the erection of a statue of Dante in Alexandria, because he had put Mohammed in hell. But perhaps Dante would have been no better than the dignitary in the matter.

The whole of the reception was stage-managed by an under-secretary in a blue-grey galabeah, with the most humorous twinkle in his eye. When each procession halted he marshalled its principal members in a row, and they chanted to the Sheikh-el-Bekri.

As the afternoon wore on, most of the processions had to be hustled away before they had quite finished. One in special, which had big drums and commenced a sacred dance, was quite hurriedly stopped. As the darkness fell, and the electric lamps flashed out like stars, I felt as if I were in the tent of Saladin surrounded with the personages of the Talisman. Darkness was the signal for departure. A Sheikh came forward and said in sonorous tones: "We are celebrating the birth of the Lord of the Arabs and the non-Arabs," and raised a prayer for the Khedive.

After this all rose, and the Lancers clattered up, and the Khedive's brother stepped into his carriage and drove away, leaving us in the centre of vast crowds of the Faithful of Islam, with the tall pavilions of the Pashas outlined by the

gay festoons of electric lamps, and with the desert behind them outlined by the domed Tombs of the Caliphs looming darkly against the clear starlit sky, as if to imprison our imaginations in the Middle Ages. . . .

The Sheikh-el-Bekri very hospitably invited our editor and myself to come back to the banquet at which he was going to entertain all the dignitaries in the evening. But the ladies could not have been present, and they were most anxious to see the evening celebrations of the Molid. So I expressed my sense of the honour and excused myself. We rather wished we had been like the Arabs, who, wanting to be present at the evening festivities, simply sat down on the ground where they were standing. The Arab is never hard up for a seat, for he is always willing to sit on the ground, and the ground in Egypt is nearly always dry.

We came back after dinner and felt rewarded, for the effect of the great pavilions with their front flaps turned up to the sky, like the trunks of trumpeting elephants, and their interiors ablaze with crystal chandeliers and rows of red and white electric lamps was monstrously fine. Also a long line of fresh stalls, where they were selling those preposterous sweets, seemed to have sprung up by magic. It was like the Ginza of Tokyo on old year's night. The effect of the stalls from behind was remarkable, for they had screens like the windows of pierced marble set with coloured glass which you have in old mosques. The crowd by this time was enormous, and there were ever so many police. The pavilions shone out splendidly. They only lacked a hecatomb of Levantines as the finishing touch to that barbaric pageant. We went into a few tents—none of them showed anything more exciting than a religious dance; most of them were content with recitations from the Koran.

I shall never forget that vast ring of flaring lights, or the genuinely religious aspect of the whole festival, or the solid masses of human beings with one thought in their minds.

But picturesque as it is, the Molid is nothing to what it was a few years ago.

The Doseh, which was the most extraordinary feature of the day, is no longer permitted, though whether it is forbidden by more civilised sentiments or by the English advisers I cannot say. It consisted of dervishes prostrating themselves for the Sheikh-el-Bekri to ride over their bodies, and is thus described by Lane: "In the way through this place, the procession stopped at a short distance from the house of the Sheykh El-Bekree. Here, a considerable number of darweeshes and others (I am sure that there were more than sixty, but I could not count their number) laid themselves down upon the ground, side by side, as close as possible to each other, having their backs upwards, their legs extended, and their arms placed together beneath their foreheads. They incessantly muttered the word Allah! About twelve or more darweeshes, most without their shoes, then ran over the backs of their prostrate companions, some beating 'bázes,' or little drums, of a hemispherical form, held in the left hand; and exclaiming Allah! and then the sheykh approached. His horse hesitated for several minutes to tread upon the back of the first of the prostrate men; but being pulled, and urged on behind, he at length stepped upon him; and then, without apparent fear, ambled, with a high pace, over them all, led by two persons, who ran over the prostrate men; one sometimes treading on the feet, and the other on the heads. The spectators immediately raised a long cry of 'Alláh lá lá lá lá láh!' Not one of the men thus trampled upon by the horse seemed to be hurt; but each, the moment that the animal had passed over him, jumped up, and followed the sheykh. Each of them received two treads from the horse; one from one of his fore-legs, and a second from a hind-leg. It is said that these persons, as well as the sheykh, make use of certain words (that is, repeat prayers and invocations) on the day preceding this performance, to enable them to endure, without injury, the tread of the horse; and that some not thus prepared, having ventured to lie down to be ridden over, have on more than one occasion, been either killed or severely injured. The performance is considered as a miracle effected through supernatural power, which has been granted to every suc-

cessive sheykh of the Saadeeyeh. Some persons assert that the horse is unshod for the occasion, but I thought I could perceive that this was not the case. They say, also, that the animal is trained for the purpose ; but if so, this would only account for the least surprising of the circumstances ; I mean, for the fact of the horse being made to tread on human beings—an act from which, it is well known, that animal is very averse. The present sheykh of the Saadeeyeh refused, for several years, to perform the Doseh. By much entreaty, he was prevailed upon to empower another person to do it. This person, a blind man, did it successfully ; but soon after died ; and the sheykh of the Saadeeyeh then yielded to the request of his darweeshes ; and has since always performed the Doseh himself."



## CHAPTER XXI

### The Return of the Holy Carpet from Mecca, and the Celebration of Bairam.

THE two greatest processions of the year at Cairo are those which celebrate the departure of the *Mahmal* for Mecca and its return from Mecca, or, as it is generally spoken of in the conversation of the foreigners, the departure and return of the Holy Carpet. I shall not attempt to be very precise in my definition of the *Mahmal*, because authorities, good authorities, contradict each other flatly on the subject, Lane, the greatest of all writers on the customs of the Egyptians, saying that the *Mahmal* contains nothing, while Mrs. Butcher, who has been in Egypt thirty years, says that the *Kisweh*, or Holy Carpet, is packed and taken in the *Mahmal* to salute the Khedive before starting on the pilgrimage, and that the *Mahmal* is brought to salute him again on the return of the pilgrims, when the carpet which was taken to Mecca the year before is brought back to Cairo. One of them must be wrong, and it hardly signifies which to the tourist, because it is the *Mahmal* itself which, full or empty, is the central feature of the procession. There is one point about which there is no dispute—the Carpet is not a carpet at all but a piece of tapestry made to go round the Kaaba at Mecca, “of the stiffest possible blacksilk—black because that is the colour of the Abbasside dynasty—embroidered heavily with gold.” The making of the *Kisweh* is a hereditary privilege in a certain family, and Egyptians estimate its value at eighty thousand pounds. The Khedive

cuts up the part of it that is returned to him to present pieces of it to great Mohammedan personages. I have myself only heard of one Christian receiving a piece ; and I have only his authority for it.

Lane's description of the *Mahmal* seemed to me to be absolutely correct, and I had a very good opportunity of judging, because the functionary in charge, to whom I had an introduction from Mansfield Pasha, stopped it for me that I might take a photograph of it. That nobody seemed to object seemed to me another extraordinary example of the liberality of feeling shown by Egyptian Mohammedans in the matter of photography, which in many Mohammedan countries is fanatically resented. Lane's description of the *Mahmal* is as follows :

" It is a square skeleton frame of wood with a pyramidal top, and has a covering of black brocade richly worked with inscriptions and ornamental embroidery in gold, in some parts upon a ground of green or red silk, and bordered with a fringe of silk, with tassels, surmounted by silver balls. Its covering is not always made after the same pattern with regard to the decorations ; but in every cover that I have seen I have remarked on the upper part of the front a view of the Temple of Makkah, worked in gold, and over it, the Sultan's cipher. It contains nothing ; but has two copies of the Kurán, one on a small scroll, and the other in the usual form of a book, also small, each enclosed in a case of gilt silver, attached externally at the top. The five balls with crescents, which ornament the *Mahmal*, are of silver gilt. The *Mahmal* is borne by a fine tall camel, which is generally indulged with exemption from every kind of labour during the remainder of its life."

Whether the Carpet is or is not conveyed in the *Mahmal*, it is pretty clear that the *Mahmal* in any case represents Egyptian royalty in the pilgrimage. Hughes, who is very well informed, says :

" It is said that Sultan Az-Zahir Beybars, King of Egypt, was the first who sent a *Mahmal* with a caravan of pilgrims to Makkah in A.D. 1272, but that it had its origin a few



THE MAHMAL WHICH CONVEYED THE HOLY CARPET TO MECCA SURROUNDED BY  
CAIRO POLICE.



THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY CARPET,

With Sultan Hassan's mosque in the background, and the Mahmal to the left of the policeman standing  
at attention.

years before his accession to the throne, under the following circumstances :

"Shaghru 'd-Durr, a beautiful Turkish female slave, who became the favourite wife of Sultan As-Salih Najmu d-din, and who on the death of his son (with whom terminated the dynasty of Aiyub) caused herself to be acknowledged Queen of Egypt, performed the hajj in a magnificent litter borne by a camel. And for successive years her empty litter was sent yearly to Makkah as an emblem of State. After her death, a similar litter was sent each year with the caravan of pilgrims from Cairo and Damascus, and is called *Mahmal* or *Mahmil*, a word signifying that by which anything is supported."

I was unfortunately away at Khartûm at the time of the departure of the Holy Carpet, so I only witnessed its return. I imagine that the earlier procession is much the finer of the two. The procession was of no great extent; it depended on quality rather than quantity, but the audience was gigantic and the auditorium not easily to be matched in the world.

By the kindness of Mansfield Pasha, the late head of the Egyptian police, who made Arabic history and institutions a study in many languages in order to understand the bearing of Mohammedan law and custom upon the code which he had to administer, we had a place given us for our carriage right opposite the permanent kiosk erected for the Khedive and his Ministers when receiving the *Mahmal*, which looks like an open-air stage. It stands far down the sort of Campus Martius under the Citadel, the upper part of which is occupied by the Market of the Afternoon and the Meidan Rumeleh. The position is magnificent, for many thousand people can be accommodated in this huge open space, and its surroundings make such a noble background for the pageant. Behind the pavilion of the Sovereign, whose family, like the Caliphs before them, have associated themselves so intimately with the Mecca pilgrimage (the Khedive himself having made the pilgrimage), rises the noble old Citadel of Saladin, a castle on a rock culminating in the soaring dome and obelisk of Mehemet Ali's mosque, the Crown of Cairo. And its lines

are carried in a bold sweep like the curve of a scimitar from the crest of its hill down to the two great mosques which stand right and left where the chief thoroughfare of the city debouches on the Citadel square. The whole curve between the Citadel and the mosques of Sultan Hassan and Al Rifai'ya is occupied by a climbing chain of smaller mosques yet more picturesque, with their arabesqued mameluke domes and their slender rose-tinted forms.

As we stood gazing towards the city waiting for the procession to appear, I thought that earth had had few things more fair to show me than this rising sweep of domes and minarets towering over the trees from the great old dome put up at the command of Sultan Hassan more than five centuries ago, to the great new dome put up five centuries later in honour of Mehemet Ali.

These fantastic shapes of the Orient wore the colour of pearl in the early morning sunshine. Pageants are early in Egypt to avoid the fierceness of the noon-day heat; the people hoped against hope that the Khedive was to receive *Mahmal* at 9 a.m., and we were recommended to be there an hour or two earlier. Most of the inhabitants of Cairo were there before us. Most of the tourists had left Egypt. The soldiers on parade were all drawn from the Egyptian Army and must have used up all the Egyptian Army quartered in Cairo. They made a fine showing; Egyptian soldiers are big men, well set up, and admirably drilled; no European drills better than the Egyptian. A sort of sky-blue is the Khedive's favourite colour for uniforms, which, with white spats, yellow faces, and scarlet *tarbushes*, makes a parade look as gay as a rainbow.

They were drawn up so as to keep a large space clear in front of the Khedivial pavilion. The police on their white Arab chargers did the actual clearing; the soldiers acted as a sort of fence, and behind them were all the poor natives in Cairo. On this occasion most of them had brought seats with them and improvised a sort of auditorium, not so much to sit on—the ground does for that—as to stand on when the procession came past. The usual comical hawkers of provisions

and other necessities (to the perverse native mind) wandered round with the connivance of the police. The bands did not play ; natives do not need to be amused while they are waiting ; they spend most of every day in waiting ; Arabs would take a prize for waiting anywhere.

A place had been roped off for the carriages of foreigners and unofficial Egyptian notables opposite the Khedivial pavilion. The official Egyptian notables stood in front of the pavilion, and there was a sort of tribune for the Diplomatic Corps, who most of them had, or pretended to have, left Cairo. They had seen too much of the *Mahmal*.

The soldiers, horse, foot, and artillery, had all arrived ; the cavalry very smart in their light blue, the staff conspicuous in white and gold ; the steps of the pavilion were getting lined with court uniforms and gay sashes. The pavilion was a three-arched *mak'ad*, like one sees in the court of a great Arab palace ; it was filled with chairs occupied by dignitaries, such as Pashas with gold bands round their turbans, in the midst of whom, clad in his robes of the sacred green, was the Sheikh-el-Bekri, the Descendant of the Prophet

The Khedive was not to be present ; he had grown tired of waiting for the *Mahmal* ; he had something which he wished to do in Alexandria ; and various things had conspired to postpone the arrival of the Carpet until long after its usual time. The pilgrims were suspected of bringing back cholera, and the wild Mohammedans of Arabia had no respect for the sanctity of the pilgrimage, and had exposed it to incessant skirmishes. So when the band played the Egyptian Anthem—no more like the original than jugged hare—Egyptian bands have no idea of music—and the guns thundered out, and the Army stood at the salute, it was only the Prime Minister driving up in a green sash to take the Khedive's place.

This was at nine-fifteen, a quarter of an hour after the *Mahmal* ought to have made its appearance, and almost immediately afterwards a burst of Oriental kettle-drums and hautboys from the entrance of the square proclaimed taht the procession was approaching. As it came into sight the

spectacle was wonderfully picturesque ; for it had for its background a sea of stolid Arabs, dressed in every colour under the sun, with the light green of the trees and that marvellous sky-line of mosques behind them rising in three tiers.

The procession was headed by the *Mahmal* itself, nodding gravely on its camel, a sort of square tent twelve feet high, of crimson and cloth-of-gold, with gold balls and green tassels. From the nature of the camel's walk it was very seldom upright, but it jogged solemnly along, surrounded by religious banners gorgeous with Arabic texts I never saw anything that looked more Oriental. It was followed by a standard-bearer and five drum-beaters mounted on fine camels with very gorgeous trappings, the same band probably that had played into Cairo every important pilgrim who had lately returned from Mecca. I daresay I should have recognised the faces if I had studied them. I was more occupied with their gorgeous trappings, especially reserved for the occasion perhaps ; they looked cleaner than usual. The camels were led by people in picturesque dresses, who did not at all look as if they had been to Mecca ; they did not even look respectable ; they looked as if they were men who did odd jobs about the bazars, hired for the occasion. Their business was to lead the band camels, not to have been to Mecca. There was even a sort of jester, who seems to go to Mecca every year, and therefore must be a very holy person. The incongruousness of this man, and of the riff-raff camel attendants, did not strike the Arab spectators at all ; their eyes were all on the *Mahmal*, the emblem which meant so much to them.

My eyes were for everything, not least for the escort, black with the suns of the Arabian desert, the famous screw-gun battery which Lord Kitchener wanted to buy for the Boer War, followed by one-half the Fourth Battalion, dressed in British khaki, a troop of cavalry, and a couple of machine guns.

That escort meant something, for they had had almost to fight their way from Mecca to the sea, so persistent was the skirmishing with which the Desert tribes had harassed the pilgrimage this year. They marched with splendid precision.



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When the *Mahmal* came abreast of the Khedivial pavilion it went through various evolutions while it described seven circles—the prescribed number. At the conclusion it advanced right up to the pavilion steps, which were crowded with great officials in brilliant uniforms. The Prime Minister came forward and received it on behalf of his Prince with deepest reverence.

After this it was proceeding at a much livelier pace, when suddenly the great functionary, to whom I had received an introduction, very politely held up his hand and stopped the procession for a few moments for me to photograph the *Mahmal*, which, as I have said, I considered the highest proof of Egyptian wide-mindedness. Then the procession swept on under the Citadel and was lost in the crowd, which no longer made any pretence of keeping in its place, but surged round those seven camels trapped with barbaric gold and crimson that had such a profound significance.

To me the procession of the *Mahmal* was not to be compared with the Molid-en-Nebbi for either variety or impressiveness. One of the most interesting features was having the principal functionaries in the robes of their office pointed out to me by Mansfield Pasha. Cabinet Ministers in Egypt are not unlike Cabinet Ministers in England in their uniform except for the *tarbush*. The Grand Kadi, the Grand Mufti, and the Sheikh-ul-Azhar were much more remarkable-looking persons.

I have never been in Egypt during *Ramadan*, and the *Bairam* I have only seen at Luxor. It was most interesting even there. It began in the early morning. It threatened to begin at six, but it was nearly two hours late. I did not repine, because every minute the light was getting better for photography and it is none too good before eight in January even in Egypt.

The young Mohammedan who had volunteered to take me led me into a large enclosure behind the mosque near the Mamuriya. Perhaps it was a mosque; it was quite as much of a mosque as the Khalifa's at Omdurman, where Slatin Pasha had to pray for so many hours every day with the Khalifa's

malignant eyes on him to see that he was looking as if he liked it.

There was an immense number of people there, all men, all dressed in white, arranged in long parallel rows. The deformed dwarf who was the official incense-shaker at Luxor, wandered up and down the line sprinkling them as they squatted waiting for the Sheikh of the chief mosque.

Presently he came surrounded by scores of men carrying splendid banners, white, blazoned with texts from the Koran in green, yellow, and black, purple, red, and blue. This little cortège halted opposite the centre of the line, the banners clustered in a sort of semicircle enveloping the Sheikh, who prayed and preached. The long lines of white-robed Moslems stood up and flung themselves down at intervals, praying vigorously; the incense-shaker set to work again, and I went with him taking photographs. I had won his countenance completely with a large piastre ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.), and he invited me through the young man, my interpreter, to accompany him. Finally the Sheikh, escorted by his banners and followed by a large proportion of the worshippers, left the enclosure very hurriedly. A little while later, as I was going towards the hotel, I met the Sheikh alone. "Wait," said the young man, as he saw me eyeing the Sheikh wistfully, "don't take him in a hurry; I will ask him to stand for you." And he did.

The whole ceremony was very beautiful; the costumes were satisfying; the devoutness was most impressive, and the low early light of a winter morning was a good atmosphere for poetical effects if it was capable of improvement for photography.

After breakfast, at the suggestion of that same Moham-medan young man, the interpreter, we went to the principal Arab cemetery of Luxor to see the people making offerings at the graves and enjoying themselves. The proportion of women was unusually large, and they were not very particular about veiling themselves. The offerings were rather make-believe. There was much more atmosphere of enjoyment. Besides shows of a Punch-and-Judy character

and the "medicine man," decked out in rags like a scare-crow, there were various vendors of bread and sugar-cane, and other sugar stuff, which mostly took the form of poles of Edinburgh Rock eight or ten feet high, striped like barber's poles. The ceremony at the cemetery was a bore ; nobody seemed to be taking it very seriously ; it resolved itself into listless touting.

## CHAPTER XXII

### The Ashura and its Mutilations

THE world would be dull without its religions—and the loss would fall more heavily on Cairo than most places, for its races are as mixed as a resurrection-pie, and the Government places no restrictions upon their religious exercises, except that the English, who are always interfering, will not allow fanatics to lie on their faces for the Descendant of the Prophet to ride over them at the Molid-en-Nebbi any longer. The Molid-en-Nebbi, I should explain, is the Festival of the Birthday of the Prophet.

I am glad to have been in Cairo before the abolition of the *Ashura*, which can be only a matter of time, and ought to have taken place long ago. Now that the dervishes are no longer allowed to dance or howl themselves into epileptic fits, let alone hang themselves up on meat-hooks stuck between their shoulder joints, there would not seem to the ordinary mind any reason why the Shia, or unorthodox Mohammedans, should be allowed to go about the streets on the night of the *Ashura* slashing their heads with swords and scourging their backs with chains until the blood spurts over them in small fountains.

But to the Egyptian mind the affair presents a different aspect. The Shia Mohammedans are mostly Persians, and the Persians are the capitalists of the Bazar, and somebody receives two thousand pounds for allowing the *Ashura* to go on. I cannot say whether the two thousand pounds go in fees to the authorities or in *bakshish*, but it is a perfectly well-known thing that the Persians are allowed to indulge

in this anachronism for the definite payment of this large sum.

I think that if I was a Persian I should like to be relieved of the responsibility; it would be worth coming to Egypt for this only, not to mention the advantages of trading in a country where the taxation is low and fixed, and the English are present to prevent rich men being squeezed.

The *Ashura* is the tenth day of Muharram, the first month of the Mohammedan year. The Shia Mohammedans observe all ten days as days of lamentation. But the Sunnite Mohammedans observe the tenth day only as being the day on which it is said that God created Adam and Eve, Heaven and Hell, the Tablet of Decree, the Pen, Fate, Life, and Death. The *Ashura* procession takes place on the tenth day, because on that day the Imam Hoseyn, the son of Ali, the nephew and son-in-law of the Prophet, was assassinated on the Field of Kerbela. His head is supposed to be kept at the Mosque of the Hassaneyn in Cairo, where immense crowds used to assemble to see the dervishes shouting and whirling, eating glass and fire, and wagging their heads for hours to the name of Allah. The women used to go in large numbers on that night.

In *Queer Things About Persia*, the book in which I collaborated with M. Eustache de Lorey, there is an elaborate account of the miracle play which is acted in Persia with so much ceremony on that day.

In Persia, which is the principal seat of the Shia Mohammedans, the feeling against the foreigner's watching this holy procession used to be so strong that he had to sit back in a room to look at it if he was on the line of route, or betake himself to a distant roof, but now the presence of foreigners is rather encouraged if they keep out of the crowd.

The Egyptian can be dangerously fanatical on occasion, but, to do him justice, he is quite large-minded about allowing infidels who are interested, to watch the Moslem processions and ceremonials and even to photograph them, and if any amusing incident occurs, he is generally ready to share a laugh about it. I think that the Egyptian has a real appre-

ciation of foreigners' being intelligently interested in the ancient customs and monuments of his country.

I love all processions and ceremonials which have the charm of antiquity, picturesqueness, and barbarism. I do not, I confess, like the sight of bloodshed, but I should not allow that to keep me away from an occasion like the procession of the *Ashura*.

We saw it one February night in the Musky, restored for once by the occasion and by the friendly shades of night to its ancient rôle of chief street of Arab Cairo. The time was, not so very long ago, when the Musky was bordered by unspoiled Arab mansions and was a sort of bazar. Nowadays the mansions have been pulled to pieces for commercial uses, almost beyond recognition, and the shops have been usurped by slop-selling Levantines. The street has no majesty left, and would have no colour if it were not the main thoroughfare up which the natives pass to the European city.

We had been down there in the afternoon. No one could have told then that anything was going to happen. All the shops looked exactly the same as usual. But Ramidge's boy, Mustafa, who was always going to take him to one of those Arab plays which are supposed to be treason in disguise, wished to make up for his remissness in that direction, and he urged Ramidge to take us to the *Ashura*, and volunteered to take seats for us overlooking the procession at five piastres (a shilling and a half-penny) each. When we got there we found the Musky almost in a state of darkness, because it is lighted chiefly by the flares in its shops, which were all packed with people shutting out the light. We were advised to go early, because the police would stop the traffic an hour before the procession. When we got there we found the traffic stopped already and a chain across the street. But the Egyptian policeman does not think it any part of his duties to act against foreigners. The constables at once made a passage for us and escorted us to our destination, headed by Ramidge's Mustafa, who explained that Ramidge would be with us in a minute. The pavements

on both sides, as well as the houses, were packed with spectators. When we got to our seats we found that they were on the first floor of an Arab restaurant, which had a veranda over the pavement for its customers, that quite precluded our seeing anything of the street. It was so like an Egyptian to let a room, from which nothing could be seen, to foreigners. Mustafa suggested that we should sit on the roof of the veranda: he had his face to save for having been taken in. But it would certainly have given way, and the police thought of a much better idea. They directed the restaurant keeper to put chairs for us out in the road, which their own patrols were keeping clear. They warned us, however, that the people in the procession might be annoyed by the proximity of infidels and might try to hustle us. They said we were not to mind that, because they would move them on. They asked Mustafa if the English ladies would be afraid. Mustafa himself was the most afraid, probably because he knew more about the risks we were running. We decided that as Captain Archer was willing to let us take the risk it was quite worth taking it, especially as we were going to get a view of the proceedings beyond our wildest hopes.

Ramidge had not turned up

It was quite exciting, even before the procession came along. The splendid-looking police troopers on their white Arabs charged the crowd at short intervals to keep them in their places, and sometimes they came down the streets at a gallop. We were surrounded by evil, evilly-behaved people. But as the police had put our chairs well out into the road it did not matter much till the crowd began to close on us behind. Then another brilliant idea struck the police: they made the restaurant keeper clear his counter, and put out chairs upon that, but we declined this inglorious safety, it was more fun in the street. And just then Ramidge turned up, and as he spoke Arabic fluently we were in a better position to understand the temper of the crowd. It was no wonder if they were in a temper, because the police were charging up and down the street incessantly. It turned out

that Ramidge had been to the police-station to give his coachman in charge. This is one of the humours of Egypt; if your cabman cheats or insults you you make him drive himself to the police-station, and the officer in charge generally refuses to let you pay any fare.

Though the police kept charging the crowd back, anybody who had anything handy to sell, such as melon seeds or pistachio-nuts, was allowed to ply his trade. And after a while the police got tired of keeping order altogether and allowed the crowd to take care of itself, which it did with great success and good-humour. The natives began to squat in front of the pavement; they became very amusing. A man who kept a library had a flight of steps of which he was proud. He would not allow any one to sit on them, and when they did, brought out basins of water and threw over them to make them move. They always went back again directly afterwards, though they would not face the actual swish of the water. At last he had used all his water up, and they sat on his steps in peace while he threatened them in vain with empty basins.

Then cats began to come out like dogs on a race-course, and tried to get back, but found the crowd too close, and flew up and down while the crowd hissed and clapped. Then the supply of cats ran short, and the crowd pretended that a passing Arab was a cat, and hissed and chivvied him, and then a woman really did lose herself like a cat and made futile dives to get back again, and the crowd got into a state of holiday enjoyment.

All of a sudden there came the unearthly noises which precede a Moslem procession, and a cart appeared between two cressets of blazing wood held very high. The cart contained only a fat man, who addressed the crowd about the martyrdom of Hoseyn at the hands of the wicked usurper. As the crowd were nearly all orthodox Mohammedans, they were on the wicked usurper's side, and were not much depressed. They were out for a holiday almost as much as we were. There was no religious fervour on the fat man's face; Mustafa recognised him as the fire-



wood contractor to the hotels. He borrowed a water-bottle at our restaurant, and he and his attendants all took a long drink to nerve them for fresh exertion. We were beginning to be afraid that the affair would be a fiasco, when suddenly the procession proper burst upon us. First came twelve men bearing aloft cressets full of flaming wood. They were followed by ten police troopers, magnificent men, on stately white Arabs, and a crowd of men carrying tall banners and more cressets flaming in the wind. In the midst of long lines of the faithful bearing lanterns were horses for the two Imams, Hoseyn and Hassan, the sons of Ali, and then came what to us constituted the *Ashura*, the half-naked men lashing themselves with chains and with their shoulders and shaven heads and faces horribly gashed, and streaming with blood, enhanced by the fact that what garments they did wear had been white when they started. They made all sorts of hoarse noises—religious noises half way between shoutings and intonations, chiefly, I think, to assist their frenzy, and those who were not flogging themselves with chains were beating their breasts.

The most conspicuous figure in the procession was the child covered with blood riding on a white horse, who represented the Imam Hoseyn's little son, Ali Akbar. We hoped that the blood was not his own.

Then came more foot-police, more horse-police, and the procession was ended. I saw no fanaticism except in the faces of the performers: the crowd did not appear to be any more interested than we were, and the climax was the announcement of Mustafa, which he had from a policeman, that the people who had been mutilating themselves in the procession were all going to have supper together at a restaurant in the Gamaliya, the chief Arab street of Cairo. We spent some time trying to find that restaurant, but without success: if they did have that supper they took precautions to keep its whereabouts a secret. The Gamaliya was almost in darkness: its residents do not spend their evenings at Gamaliya cafés; they go to places where they can see more life, such as the Esbekiya street.

I was disappointed with this *Ashura* procession ; there is no reality about it in Egypt except the flow of blood ; it is an exotic of the Persian colony. What lends such dignity to the processions of the Holy Carpet and the Molid-en-Nebbi is that they are expressions of the national religion. All the millions of Sunnite Mohammedans in Egypt breathe fervour into them. In Persia the *Ashura* is the most important of religious ceremonies, because the fervour in the Shiite millions of Persia is behind it. The Shahs and the *Mollas* have always done all they could to foster the national excitement over it to prevent Persia falling under the influence of Sunnite Constantinople.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Arab Domestic Processions

CAIRO is full of prizes for the photographer. The Arab loves pageants, and is as fond of being the central figure in a show as Mr Roosevelt himself. His two great opportunities for it are getting married and going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, or rather returning from one. I imagine that there must be a sort of undertaker; perhaps there is a whole profession of them to supply the palanquins and camel-trappings and banners and bands which characterise the processions of both kinds. At any rate, the same procession did duty for a number of pilgrims, as I know from my own kodak. Sometimes the processions are much longer and more elaborate than at others, I suppose in proportion to the amount of money which the family is willing to pay the undertaker. Large or small, the processions are always gorgeous and barbaric, and their approach is always heralded by a tum-tuming and cymballing of wild Oriental music.

I hardly ever went out in the streets without my kodak, and if I was in the hotel when I heard those weird sounds I always flew for my kodak and flew out into the street. And it was seldom that there was not something worth photographing even when one had scores of photographs of palanquins and camel bands.

There is a regular pilgrim season in Cairo, just before the return of the Holy Carpet from Mecca. The private pilgrims move more quickly. Their arrival causes great excitement. In the old Arab part of Cairo making a pilgrimage to Mecca is still such an event that, when the pilgrim returns, they paint

the supposed incidents of his journey on the outside of his house

These illustrations do not always bear any relation to facts. The trains and steamboats, drawn and painted as a child of six might execute them, have the basis of the railway journey to Suez and the voyage from Suez to Jeddah. Palm-trees of course he would see at every oasis ; lions and leopards are unlikely, though faintly possible, on such a frequented route. The artist generally puts one in. The robber tribes, who form the real peril, are never introduced, though dragons would appear to form part of the fauna of Arabia. The artist always puts in the most marvellous and out-of-the-way things he has heard of ; it is only because aeroplanes and the big wheel at Earl's Court, and the flip-flap and the wiggle-woggle, and the scenic railway and football matches at the Crystal Palace do not come within the Arab ken that they do not appear as things the pilgrim has seen on the road to Mecca. There was one sublimely ridiculous pilgrim's picture painted on the wall of a palace of Kait Bey in which a cupid, wings and all, was introduced into the experiences of the pilgrim ; but this perhaps is merely allegorical of his having fallen by the way.

The return of a Hadji from Mecca is one of the finest splashes of colour in modern Cairo. Most elaborate preparations are made for it ; the street which is the approach to his home is decorated with festoons of lanterns, and little red-and-white flags with the Khedivial crest, and texts from the Koran, for anything up to half a mile ; and outside the house a large marquee, brilliantly decorated with lamps and flags and texts and large lustre balls, is erected and packed with all the easy chairs of the neighbourhood and is sometimes richly carpeted.

As the pilgrims always return by railway now, there is no longer a procession out to meet them at the Birket-el-Hadj—the Lake of the Pilgrims—to escort them into Cairo, as there was in the days when the caravan route was the only way to cross Egypt.

Just outside the railway station on the opposite side of the



STANDARD-BEARERS IN A PROCESSION, WITH AN "ARABEAH" (CAIRO CAB) BEHIND.



#### THE RETURN OF THE PILGRIM FROM MECCA

The procession waiting for the pilgrim. On the right are camels kneeling down On the left are the silver-and-ivory palanquins.

road there is a sunken mosque, very popular with the friends of pilgrims. Here the *matériel* for the processions is kept and here the coolies who are going to take part in it hang about. They are a ruffianly lot, as bad as the coolies who put on the uniforms of a Chinese regiment when the Colonel is obliged to show some men as well as draw the pay and provisions. I expect they have a good deal of treating and correspond to the loafers who hang about big sporting events in Anglo-Saxon countries

I paid more than one visit to the purlieus of that mosque to see the grand palanquins made of ebony and ivory and silver reposing on the dust; the camels in their grand clothes kneeling down because they had their knees tied like the fashionable women of to-day; the banners and emblems propped against the railings, and the masqueraders who hadn't yet got their masques on.

The odd thing is that, whether the procession is for a pilgrim returning from the Holy City or a person entering on the holy estate, the element of Comedy is in the foreground.

Long before the train could possibly arrive, sometimes I expect, not long after it has left Suez, some hours away, the procession goes and forms outside the railway station—which is very useful to kodakers.

At last the Hadji arrives. Even then it is some time before the band strikes up its barbaric clash and jingle and bumming, and the slow serpent moves forward. So slow is it that while the procession was actually on the march I used to go backwards and forwards, kodaking and taking notes about its various features. The people in the procession had not the least objection to being kodaked, but their anxiety for *bakshish* interfered with their ceremonial exercises.

I remember one very splendid procession which began with a man balancing on his nose a bouquet big enough for a Jack on the Green. He was followed by three attendants, one of whom carried an enormous lantern with a *meshrebiya* work frame, and the others the shields made of mirror in

front, and brass behind, and stuck all over with shells and inscriptions, which, suspended from the tops of tall staffs, are carried in all such processions. Behind them came a buffoon representing an Englishman, got up like the stage Englishman of a French comedy, with long red whiskers, clothes with enormous cheques, a red tie and a tall white hat. He kept the crowd in fits; he was most likely saying scurrilous things about the British authorities in Cairo. There were a lot of Carnival people with him, who seemed to have got their ideas of costume from the representation of *La Bohême* which had been going on at the Abbas theatre. The merriment was uproarious; nothing could have been more unlike a religious occasion.

They were followed by three tall camels, draped almost to their feet with a sort of scarlet pall encrusted with shells and bits of brass and mirror. Even their bridles were encrusted with shells. The first had a flat circus saddle, on which stood a *bedawin* Sheikh in very grand robes, waving a battle-axe. The other two camels carried boys with a kettle-drum slung on each side, which they beat incessantly. Right on their heels were a foot band with more kettle-drums and cymbals, which they clashed without stopping or any regard to tune.

Then came three of the magnificent palanquins shaped like the cabins of Venetian gondolas, and covered with mosaics of silver, ebony, and ivory as rich as the mosaics on an Indian workbox—really magnificent works of art. I could see four women in one of them, facing each other in two pairs like the occupants of a carriage. The way these palanquins are carried is very peculiar: they are slung between two camels, fastened so close to each other that the head of the back camel is always under the centre of the palanquin. It must be awful for the occupants. The camel is an uneasy beast at any time, and doubtless manifests its displeasure by knocking its head against the floor at every stride. Both camels are gorgeously caparisoned in the shell-encrusted scarlet cloths, but the front camel has a grand plume of feathers on its head, and a plate of bells on its



hump in addition. One palanquin consisted almost entirely of ivory decorated delightfully with bands of ebony and silver mosaics. It had five gold Tunis flag-staff heads at its top and two mother-of-pearl globes in front.

The turban of the pilgrim, carried on a staff, richly inlaid with mother-of-pearl, was one of the chief features in the procession. It, and the shields of mirror and the other trappings of the procession were all wreathed with flowers

Then, as it was time to amuse the crowd again, there came another swarm of masqueraders, very suggestive of the Fifth of November, followed by a band of very native natives playing Scotch bagpipes, still decorated with the tartans of the clans which they were supposed to have served. All the musical instrument shops in Cairo sell Scotch bagpipes.

Then came the friends of the Hadji, splendid-looking people, in very grand clothes, all riding on white asses, resplendent with silver chains and gorgeous beads, forming a guard of honour for the Hadji himself, a grand *bedawin* Sheikh, dressed in a white, silver, red, and green *burnûs* and head-shawl, and with a silver cord twisted round the latter like the Crown of Thorns in mediæval pictures. He was not at all the typical Hadji returning from Mecca, who is generally worn to a rag by the hardships of the journey, and lolling back in a hired victoria; he was riding on a magnificent Arab, very sunburned, very hard and fit, as they say in sporting circles. At any time he would have been a man of great dignity, and now his face wore a sublime expression of religious joy, and as he stooped forward to embrace his friends, the scene was truly pathetic and patriarchal. It made one of the finest pictures I remember, when the procession came to an involuntary halt as it turned round from the Boulevard of Clot Bey into the narrow Sharia Bab-el-Bahr. Across the narrow street with its overhanging windows, banners of red and white were fluttering in the wind, and lamps and crystal chandeliers were hanging from lines across the street as thickly as grape bunches in an arbour, till the street looked like the Sûk of the Scent Merchants at Tunis on the night of the Birthday of the Prophet. The

houses were decorated with palm branches and flowers ; the shop fronts and the windows were lined with eager women, who forgot their veils in their ecstasy ; and though it was three in the afternoon of a brilliant summer day all the lamps and chandeliers were lit. There was a babel of sound ; the crowd shrilled in their happiness ; the water-carriers struck notes as clear as a bell with their brazen saucers, and the drums and the hautboys, the bagpipes and the cymbals clashed out the noises of the Orient. In the centre of the crowd the Hadji was bending forward on his saddle to kiss his friends with a glow of ecstasy on his face. All round him were grouped the dignitaries on their white asses, and a few yards off were his family crowded into a closed carriage covered with a richly brocaded cloth, in a state which could only be described as seraphic.

I had to leave that procession : it must have taken hours to go down a street so narrow as the Bab-el-Bahr. The Emir of the Hadj himself had not such a fine procession.

I saw many Mecca pilgrim processions in Cairo—some more, some less resplendent, and I enjoyed them most when I had taken all the kodaks I wanted, and could not find one fresh element to make a note of. Then I could abandon myself to the spectacular effects, in which I simply delighted. Whenever I heard that mad Oriental music in the distance, I made a bee-line for it, and found something delightful, whether the tall camels in their mediæval scarlet caparisons and the swaying palanquins and the waving banners and emblems, were coming up the broad Street of the Camel, along the front of Cook's and Shepherd's and the Continental in the midst of the semi-European traffic, or were forcing their way by inches through the more native streets hung with banners and lanterns. I never saw one in the bazars, but few people live in them ; they are merely shops ; and the police may have something to say on the subject.

But I have seen a wedding procession passing through the Bazar sometimes, and to the European eye there is not much difference between a wedding procession and a pilgrim procession. The same camel-bands and palanquins and mas-

queraders do duty in both. In either case, in the native town, the approach to the house for a long way is decorated with lanterns and red and white flags, and if there is space in the street a grand marquee is erected in front of the house, lined with texts from the Koran in gorgeous colours, and hung with lanterns and often richly carpeted and furnished. This is for the male friends, but at marriages they generally find their way into the houses, and go to all sorts of places which are forbidden technically. Egyptians are very slack in those matters. What goes on at a wedding inside a grand house I have described in *Queer Things About Egypt*, published a few months ago, in the chapter entitled "Chips from the Court."

The Arabs spend a great deal on weddings; there is a street which runs parallel with the Musky on the north side. When the Musky was very crowded and I was in a hurry, I used to strike into it, because I hate elbowing my way. It was quite a long street. One day when I turned up into it to get out of a crowd I was surprised to find that it had disappeared, its place being taken by a long hall closed from the sky, carpeted, hung with chandeliers and lanterns, walled in with gay awnings, furnished with lounges and decorated with growing palm-trees all the way along. I asked Ali, who was with us, what had happened. He said, "Two people marry," referring, I think, to a single wedding. At the back of the El-Moayyad mosque once I came upon a whole square, quite a large one, which had been converted into a marquee for a wedding.

The best wedding marquee we saw during our stay in Cairo was outside the large house in the angle made by the Sharia El-Tabbana and the Merdani mosque. It was lined with very grand texts from the Koran, and very richly carpeted, and full of gorgeous armchairs, and was there for more than a week. Every time we passed we tried to ascertain what it was there for, because the neighbours seemed equally positive that it was there for the reception of a pilgrim and that it was there for a wedding. Finally we discovered that it was for both. There was an uncle who was coming back from Mecca and a nephew who was going

to take the plunge, which is not so great for an Arab as for a Christian, because he can get out of it on well-understood, though rather expensive terms. Arab women are better protected than any others on the monetary side of divorce. In a good many ways the Arab system seems the ideal one, and they seldom use it without urgent reasons.

To our great regret, we missed the uncle's triumphant progress through Cairo from the railway station. A Hadji procession would have been simply glorious in that narrow and ancient street, which winds over the hill from the Bab-es-Zuweyla to the Merdani mosque. But we had notice that the wedding would be on a certain night just before midnight, and we went to it.

It was well worth it. The drive itself was striking in its contrasts. The Esbekiya—I refer to the quarter of sin, and not to the fainéant garden—was braying with brass bands, blazing with flares and electric lights, buzzing with people, having a night out; the cafés round the Ataba El-Khadra still had their complement of dreamy-looking Arabs doing nothing particular except smoking hubble-bubbles or poring over a Nationalist newspaper; the Sharia Mohammed Ali, down which we drove to the Bab-el-Khalk, was as dull as usual, except where a belated Levantine tailor was finishing a guinea suit for an Arab toff. The Bab-el-Khalk looked lonely without its queue of people crowding into the police court, though this was compensated by the look of antiquity conferred on the Saracenic façade of the Arab Museum by the half-light.

Mystery began as we plunged into the narrow, winding Sharia Taht-er-Reba'a, the street of the Little Blue Mosque, which was quite dark and had its silence unbroken by the white shadows of men who flitted past us. Presently we could see the lofty garden wall of the El-Moayyad mosque looming faint and black against the starlit sky. We dismounted for a minute at the Bab-es-Zuweyla, whose dark arch framed a single feeble light. We passed through the gate into the Sukkariya, so crowded and bustling by day. It was dark, deserted, and silent. All you could make out were

the dim sky-lines of its tall mosques. But within the gate itself silence was broken by a blind *fikee* and his wife, who were intoning the Koran in a melancholy drawl to an audience of nobody—merely accumulating virtue. We got into our carriage again and drove on up the hill, casting a look backwards at the vague fantastic outlines of the two great minarets, which the El-Moayyad mosque has planted on the old Saracenic towers of the Bab-es-Zuweyla. There was hardly a single light in the street, we almost drove into the Kismas-el-Ishaky mosque in the gloom, and our way seemed to get darker and darker as we drove down the Sharia Darb-el-Ahmar and round the point of Mohammed Katkhoda's exquisite fountain and Koran school.

But before we had gone much farther a blaze of light broke upon our eyes. Festoons of lanterns and flags adorned with the Khedivial emblem and Koran texts were looped across the street, and right ahead of us was that great pilgrimage and wedding marquee roofing in the entire square of the mosque and filled with a blinding glare of electric light.

The interior of the marquee presented a very different spectacle from yesterday. In the high light of the great chandeliers and crystal lamps, the noble Koran embroideries with which it was lined positively glowed and the armchairs and the long *dikkas*, covered with rich carpets and tapestries, were filled by dignified-looking Arabs, mostly in rich native dress. The speaker who was addressing them was almost the only man in the place in European dress, and turbans far outnumbered *tarbúshes*. He had a beautiful delivery—beautiful enough to give me great pleasure; though of course I could not understand a word he was saying. Ramidge, who was with us, said it was mild Nationalism, a sort of Egyptian castles in Spain. And the big, gilt glass, tinselly-looking fly-balls with which the marquee was hung to multiply reflections, seemed more appropriate. They were as big as foot-balls. But the speaker flowed on and on, till it was more like a sermon than a speech. But the audience continued rapt, and almost reduced to tears.

After we had watched for a while from the outside our

presence was detected, and the speaker suspended his speech. Armchairs were found for the men of our party in a most conspicuous position—we almost dreaded that the huge bouquets, which two or three of the guests were handling on their knees, would be forced on us, in the extravagance of Egyptian hospitality—and the ladies were literally hustled into the house.

An Arab domestic procession inside the house on the occasion of a wedding is much more astonishing than any street procession could be. An inconceivable number of people are crushed into the rooms. Our ladies were escorted upstairs by a small boy in vivid checks, who talked the whole time in broken English so hashed up that they could hardly understand a word he said. He first showed them into a room absolutely packed with women and children, sitting on the floors, on the seats, on the arms of the chairs, on everything that would sustain a human form, and doing absolutely nothing but murdering the air with shouted conversations. There did not seem to be any windows, so the temperature and atmosphere were indescribable. The small boy treated everything as a show, and at his imperious bidding space was made for the English ladies by still further crushing on one of the divans. Nobody seemed the least surprised to see them, and there was no semblance of a hostess. Their presence created more interest than the wedding itself; everybody crowded round them and fingered their clothes all over. The guests' own dresses were of course beyond description—the wildest plagiarisms of European costume transmuted by the extravagance of the Oriental imagination. Mascagni would have written a whole opera up to these costumes. But all of them wore slippers with the highest heels.

Special interest was taken in strangers by a tall, slab-sided Abyssinian negress, probably the most valuable possession of the harem, because Abyssinian slaves are very highly esteemed. She was attired in bright pink satin, made perfectly plain to her figure like a servant's dress. It gave her the appearance and all the angles of a dressing-table.

She was abnormally tall and abnormally black. Her hair was strained tightly into a knot at the back of her head, and on her shining forehead was a large wreath of pink roses.

Their other chief patron was an enormously fat lady dressed in white satin, who had no angles at all, and for the matter of that, no shape. She had tucked her feet under herself till she looked like an enormous pear. You were sure that if you pushed her over she would right herself like a mandarin doll. Up to this she had taken no interest in the proceedings, and had been apparently asleep. She had a silver Assyut shawl over her head, which gave the effect of a Christmas cracker.

At this stage the hegemony of the small boy was ruthlessly torn from him by an elderly female, who came forward, with unmentionable details, to literally push the English ladies into the bridal chamber, which was open to the room, though it had folding doors, but which they had not yet noticed, in the confusing mass of Egyptian womanity.

Nearly the whole of it was taken up with a vast bed covered with pink satin; it had pink satin valances, a pink satin counterpane, pink satin curtains, and a pink satin canopy; it even had pink satin steps up to it. There was just room for two chairs beside the bed, one of which was occupied by the bridegroom, who smiled with effusive benignity and seemed much relieved by having something fresh to smile at, and the other by the bride, who was being rapidly divested of her jewels—and her clothes. They were just dragging her things off. She was so tired that she could hardly hold her head up; the stripping of her white satin garments was the culmination of festivities, which had lasted for two days and two nights without stopping. The English ladies then turned tail though the audience made entreating gestures to them not to leave at such an early stage. But they did not feel certain how much conventions might compel them to witness if they did stay, so they literally fought their way out.

It was much to my relief, for I was getting very tired of

listening to that interminable sermon and refusing the cups of coffee with which hospitality plied me at intervals of a few minutes. Ramidge, who knew more about Egyptian weddings than we did, now insisted that we should leave. We were so dead tired that we did not notice anything on our way home. I did not even remember to ask Ramidge whether the *seffeh* serenading the bridegroom round the streets took place that night or the night before.

Since, with the exception of a fortnight, I have always lived in the Ismailiya quarter when in Cairo, I don't know whether the more native parts suffer more frequently from the night *seffehs* accorded to bridegrooms. We used to hear them only once in a way, but I was lucky enough to see one once about half-past one when I was returning from a dance at the Savoy Hotel. It was passing down the Sharia Manakh. First came a band on foot playing the usual mad tunes and making an awful noise over it (all the people in the hotel who had not been to dances and had not turned out to see what it was, were swearing about it next morning). Then came men carrying *mesh'als*, cressets of blazing wood stuck on tall staves or frames. These were followed by other men carrying a sort of set piece—a large frame with about fifty lamps on it, arranged in four revolving circles. The bridegroom and his friends followed in a sort of circle, all facing this frame, and each of them carrying a lighted candle and a flower, and the procession wound up with more musicians. Every now and then it stopped, and somebody sang something in the droning, Oriental way, which is more like reciting. The whole thing was exceedingly noisy and exceedingly picturesque. In front of the bridegroom himself were men walking backwards with huge crystal affairs in their hands.

At first I thought that it was a pilgrim's procession. For once in the Fayum I was awoken in the small hours of the morning by that tell-tale music, and saw passing under my window a number of these *mesh'als* and people carrying candles in front of a local hadji who had arrived by train (it must have been a luggage train, for they don't have a night passenger train service in the Fayum). That was



amazingly impressive, for all the acts of homage paid to the wan pilgrim, exhausted by the desert march in Arabia, were made a thousand-fold more impressive by the fitful glare of the cressets. And the stillness of the night under the flashing stars made such a background for the chants of religion and the shouts of ecstasy.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### The Museums of Cairo

AS might have been expected, Cairo has a first-rate museum of Egyptian antiquities. The exhibits are not too crowded; the attendants have the most delightful manners I ever met in a museum. They rise and stand at attention when you come into a room; they offer you their chairs; they draw back curtains for you, if you want to look at a papyrus which cannot be left exposed to the sunlight; to be brief, they do anything except understand you. It seems an odd thing in a country where there are thousands of English-speaking Arabs that the only attendant in the Museum who can speak anything but his native language is the man who takes the money at the door. I always meant to ask Professor Maspero, the director, if a knowledge of English is supposed to have the same effect upon an Egyptian as an acquaintance with Christianity has upon Chinese and Japanese servants. Untrustworthiness is surely the reason for not employing English-speaking attendants in a country, under English administration, for a museum where nine visitors out of ten do or can speak English. The only other shortcoming is the want of adequate labelling and cataloguing. There is a most interesting catalogue, but it has not been brought up to date, and has a woeful want of lucidity in its arrangement: it is only by the merest fluke that you could ever find your place in it; it might have been easier to find your way about in the labyrinth of Crete, where the *Minotaur* was kept; and why are only the most important objects labelled? Everything is labelled at the British Museum and the Louvre.

There is the air of grace and space that you get in an Italian museum. Right and left as you enter, you have the general effect of an Egyptian temple, while the principal hall, which acts as a sort of tribune, is suggestive of a church with galleries. As you enter this tribune you pass two superb sphinxes of Thothmes III., as perfect as when they left the workshop, and behind them are two of the most marvellous exhibits in the collection—funeral boats which floated on the waters of the Nile nearly five thousand years ago at the funeral of the Pharaoh Autuiabri Horus, hardly to be distinguished in form from boats in use to-day.

Last time I went into this tribune, the summer had begun and tourists were growing few, so the new discoveries of the year were being unpacked and put into their places. It added to the make-believe one gets in a museum to hear the chant of the Arabs as they hoisted a new Colossus twenty feet high into its place with the eyes of former Colossi fixed upon them.

To me some of the most interesting things in the Museum are on the ground floor in the galleries to the left, for it is there that you find the painted statues of the Pharaohs and their subjects, which are so lifelike that you expect to see them move. The statue of the Sheikh-el-Beled, that is the Omdeh, though it is not painted, is the most lifelike of them all; he has the face of a self-satisfied American athlete. In the same room is the inimitable scribe, No. 78, who has been kneeling in the attitude of attention waiting to take down dictation all these thousands of years, and the diorite statue of Chephren, the Pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty, who built the second Pyramid of Gizeh, and has an expression as subtle as that of Leonardo da Vinci's Monna Lisa. In an adjoining room is the bronze statue of Pepi the First, very elegant, very lifelike, almost as beautiful as Greek statues produced nearly three thousand years later. Close by are ten beautiful and perfect statues of Usertsen I., sitting round a tomb.

The princes of Ancient Egypt were fond of being sculptured with their wives or mothers sitting beside them, with their hands resting on each other; the statues are not always charming in art, but they are always charming in feeling. The

pride of the Museum is the famous Cow of Hathor transported here from Der-el-Bahar at Thebes, with the gaily coloured shrine in which it was found a few years ago. For the combination of colour, condition, and antiquity this statue is almost unrivalled.

But one need not particularise much, for the charm of the Cairo Museum is general; it enables you to understand the life of Ancient Egypt by a well-arranged collection of all the objects used by the Ancient Egyptians in their everyday life. There is even one—the only one known to be in existence—of the incense-burners shaped like tobacco pipes, which figure in the great ceremonial pictures of the tombs.

The Museum is a museum of tombs—most of our knowledge of Ancient Egypt is derived from the tombs. Accordingly we have here sculptured tombs and their false doors, for it was the instinct of the Ancient Egyptian to conceal the entrance to his tomb. We have sarcophagi of stone, sarcophagi of plain carved wood, and the sarcophagi we know best, of wood brilliantly gilt, and painted in the likeness of the deceased. There are mummies innumerable in all stages of being stripped; there are the alabaster canopic jars which received the viscera of the deceased for separate interment, as the viscera of dead Popes are interred to this very day; and there is elaborate furniture which went into the sepulchres of the great. Of this there are superb exhibits, unequalled elsewhere, for in the sepulchre of the mother of Akhnaton, the heretic Pharaoh, opened at the expense of an American gentleman a year or two ago, were discovered a chariot, and beds, and state chairs, and all the smaller paraphernalia, richly plated with gold, and these have been deposited in the Cairo Museum.

The mummies here are of unusual interest, for there are among them two of Egypt's greatest kings—Seti I. and Rameses II., with their high Roman noses and firm, delicately chiselled chins and lips so well preserved that it takes little effort to picture them in the flesh.

There was a period in Egypt when the deceased was provided with presentments or typifications of what he would

require to use, if he were still a man in the future state. The Cairo Museum is rich in these, and in the little images of the gods, the scarabs, the jewels, the signs of life and power that were buried with him.

In the richly gilt mummy cases, which can only have represented the features of the deceased conventionally, though they are very human and lifelike, the Museum abounds. It also has considerable numbers of pictures of Egyptians of the Roman period, a mild-eyed effeminate people, not unlike the Pompeians. But they are not as truthful as the little figures, in painted wood, of scribes and *fellahin* which line the glass cases down below. Those might be kodaks of living people.

There is a fine collection of the jewels of ancient queens and princesses, some of them marvellously modern in type, all of them marvellously fresh. The Ancient Egyptians excelled in the art of enamelling on gold; they also manufactured false gems; but of gems there are few in these cases, the jewels consisting chiefly of gold and enamels, and the less valuable opaque stones.

The Christian exhibits of the Museum belonging to Roman times are less interesting and mostly of very inferior workmanship, but they are highly valuable from the point of view of religious history, though one would give them all for that breathing, moving, sunburnt statue of Thi, in its stiff white petticoat, taken from the sanctuary of his stately tomb at Memphis, which is one of the treasure-houses of Egyptian sculpture. The Museum is rich in altars of libation and statues of the gods. The pick of Monsieur Le Grain's great find of statues at Karnak had been brought here. The two long entrance galleries below are filled with magnificent sarcophagi; the two long galleries above them are lined with gorgeous gold mummy cases. But these are not so interesting to me as the smaller rooms, which contain the little bronze statues of the gods, the tiny glazed pottery statues of the gods in which the Egyptians excelled, and the papyri decorated with miniature pictures like the manuscripts of the Middle Ages; and the long gallery filled with the implements

and furniture of Egyptian everyday life, which were many of them so very like our own, especially the stools and chairs ; the Pharaohs sat up like white men ; they did not squat like Orientals. Of charms, and bead necklaces, and scarabs there are, of course, no end. I have already remarked the fact that numbers of the scarabs in the Museum, taken out of tombs by antiquaries themselves, and otherwise to be recognised as genuine by experts, appear to the untutored eye coarse, ugly, modern imitations : it is impossible to judge a scarab unless you are an expert.

Unfortunately I have never seen scarabs offered for sale in that most delightful part of the Museum, the Salle de Vente. Here the Director has exposed for sale (the proceeds of which go to help the fund for excavation) all the antiquities which the Museum does not wish to keep, because it has sufficient specimens of them. Whenever I went into the Museum, I made a point of visiting the Salle de Vente to see if there were any fresh bargains. One day I found that they had more than a hundred of the little glazed pottery gods an inch or two high, for which I had been looking in vain from the first day that I entered the Museum. I bought them all except ten. There are always necklaces of mummy-beads for sale, and the little clay Ushapti images which were buried with people, little statues of clay, bronze, and wood from two inches to two feet high ; mummy cases ; canopic vases ; silver coins, chiefly of Alexander the Great ; and so on. The museum prices are moderate, and it goes without saying that every object sold is genuine. The Museum of Antiquities is one of the most delightful places in Cairo.

The Arab Museum, which is housed in a fine new building in the Saracenic style, near the Governorat, cannot be called so interesting as the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, nor is it very extensive. Its principal glory is its collection of crystal mosque lamps of the Middle Ages. It is said to be the finest collection of old Moslem glass in existence ; and these antique crystal lamps, with their blue and gold inscriptions, which swung in the mosques of Cairo with their value unrecognised, almost unheeded, are

not only wonderfully beautiful but full of suggestions of the magic and mystery of the Orient. Now, that a good one is known to be worth upwards of a thousand pounds, it would not be safe to leave them in the mosques, for the Arab is only too ready to go to the curio dealer.

The display of antique Oriental tiles is by no means as fine as one would expect, nor is there much fine *plâtre ajouré*. The museums of Tunis are richer in these. But vast and gorgeous lamps of bronze or brass, and the exquisitely chased tables, called *kārsi*, made of brass inlaid with silver, are very well represented; as are the head-stones of tombs richly carved and arabesqued, and the woodwork of mosques. In one place there is a room such as you get in the old mameluke houses, surrounded with carved woodwork and with a fountain in the centre of its inlaid marble pavement. It may have all formed part of one room in some particular house, but I suspect that it has been put together; and if so the principle might be extended with great advantage. Oriental carvings and furniture look so much better if they are treated as the decorations and furniture of a room instead of being exhibited in cases. The Arab Museum, which has the chief treasures of Mohammedan art in Cairo, is not half as impressive as the Maison de France, where the French Consul-General has his official residence. In the Maison de France everything forms part of the scheme of decoration, and is therefore doubly effective. There are some very choice pieces, like the roof of the great hall, worked into it, and many of its treasures ought to be in the Arab Museum.

I do not think that there is any advantage in particularising the Kufic inscriptions, the gemmed glass of Kamariya windows, the gigantic lamps, the gorgeous old doors of sycamore wood inlaid with carved ivory and mother-of-pearl, and bronze inlaid with silver, the inlaid pulpits and reading-desks and *mihhrabs* from the mosques; the overlaid ceilings, and the Arab pottery with its intense blues. It is sufficient to say that the finest specimens of Saracenic decorative art are to be found in this museum.

In the galleries above the Museum is kept the Khedivial Library. Of the practical part, which corresponds to the Library of the British Museum, I need say nothing here, but I must advert briefly to the wonderful collection of ancient illuminated Korans, executed for former rulers of Egypt. There are some quite ancient manuscripts here, on papyrus, up till A.D. 816, and after that on parchment and leather. The superb illuminated Korans of the mediæval Caliphs are kept in glass cases. The attendants here can speak a little English, and request you not to put your elbows through the "glaze"

They dust "the glaze" with an ostrich feather whenever you stop to look at anything. I was not even allowed to cut a pencil without going outside on to the landing.

These huge and noble manuscripts of the Koran, which are generally about a yard high, were mostly executed in Spain and North Africa between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries. The great Koran of the Mosque of Amr, which dates back to the year 725 of the Christian Era, is on leaves two feet square, with letters as large as the Psalters of the Siena Library; it is on parchment and has mild illuminations. In case 14 there are superb Korans of Sultan Hassan, who founded the gigantic mosque; a gold chrysanthemum marks the name of Allah whenever it appears. A great number of the finest Korans here were executed for Sultan El-Azraf Shaban 1363-1367. He had a wonderfully fine taste in Korans, and a liking for the Kufic character. This seems to have been the Golden Age of Korans. There are Korans of Sultan Barkûk as much as four feet by six. Some of his smaller ones are very rich. The Korans of Bars Bey 1422-1438, one of the great building Caliphs, are much plainer than those of his immediate predecessors, but they are very, very beautiful. Masses of beaten gold are used in them. The great building Caliph, Kait Bey, who reigned at the end of the fifteenth century—from 1468-1495—has Korans here as beautiful as the roofs of his mosques. He was a great patron of the arts.

The collection also includes the beautifully illuminated



books rather like our missals, and some superlatively rich and very fine Persian Korans. The Turkish manuscripts here are remarkably interesting and gay ; the Turkish Korans are the most exquisite and delicate in the whole place. They look like gems of beaten gold. In a Persian manuscript of the fifteenth or sixteenth century there is a picture of polo being played with clubs just like ours, and goal-posts only differing in their tips. In case 47 is an interesting coloured picture of the mamelukes as they rode to their death. There are also collections of Firmans, and autographs of the Sultans of Turkey in the style of our illuminated addresses, but on a bright scarlet ground ; and of early Arabic books printed in Europe and elsewhere. The Arab bookbindings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are like our seventeenth-century bindings. In the Arab bindings from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century there are some very rich specimens of stamping in colour.

I have not attempted to give anything like a comprehensive account of the Library, or either of the Museums, because it would be overloading the book with a quantity of difficult names, which to many of my readers would be quite unintelligible. I could not discover any catalogue to the Arabic collections, but I supposed that most people who go to look at the exquisite objects which are exhibited in them, go to look at them as works of beauty ; and even if the name of the Caliph or Bey for whom they were executed were attached, would either not read it at all, or promptly forget it. It is exceedingly difficult to get the proper names and dates of anything in Cairo ; you have to be satisfied with impressions.

## CHAPTER XXV

### The Arab Hammam—A Classical Turkish Bath

THE manager of the principal hotel in Cairo assured me that there was not a single Turkish bath, or any other kind of bathing establishment in Cairo to which an ordinarily fastidious European could go. He may have been misinformed, but he was very certain. He said, "You can't get a bath that you could go to outside of an hotel."

This is the more extraordinary because when Edward Lane published his book upon Modern Egyptians many years ago there were between sixty and seventy Turkish baths patronised by natives, and there must be many more now, since Cairo has increased so immensely in size.

It is true that rich natives have a private *hammam* in their own mansions, and this of course makes it more difficult to keep going *hammams* good enough for Europeans; many expensive institutions in Egypt would have to close to-morrow if it were not for the support of extravagant natives. On the other hand it may be urged that the Arabs, who have baths in their own mansions, go to the public baths a good deal because they meet their friends there: and sometimes, as on the occasion of a wedding, they hire an entire public bath.

The *hammams* of Cairo had a great attraction for me. I often went into one with Ali as we passed down an old street in the native quarter when he told me that it was ancient or beautiful, but he never would let me take a bath in them. "Might have trouble," he said, when I looked as if I was going to suggest it, incidentally corroborating the hotel-keeper.

Of course if I had wanted very much to try an Arab *hammam* I should not have chosen a bath in an old by-street in the native town. I should have looked about for one in the Ismailiya quarter, and there Ali might not have raised the same objection, but it certainly would have been less picturesque.

I went into some *hammans* with Ali, which must have been at least two centuries old, more than that I would not say, because I learnt from the exquisite little sixteenth-century Suleiman Pasha mosque in the Citadel, how one can be deceived by the antique appearance of buildings in Arab cities. There were parts of that mosque which looked old enough for St. Mark's at Venice, or one of the buildings of the Norman Kings at Palermo.

Indeed these old baths looked so much older than the Middle Ages, as far as their appearance went, that except for the octagonal fifteenth-century shape of the central fountains, they might have been ancient Roman, of the small kind you find in places like Pompeii. The enormous baths of the Imperial times which you find at Rome were clubs and institutions, not mere washing-places.

One feature which is common to all the good ancient baths is the lavish use of white marble, which doubtless, much of it, came from Roman buildings, and doubtless often had been used for the decoration of Byzantine churches in the meantime. The Romans did such an immense amount of veneering brick and stone with thin sheets of white marble.

The importance of baths as public institutions is shown by the fact that their façades, where they are ancient, generally are like those of small mosques or Dervish *tekkes*, built of red and white stone intermixed, panelled and arabesqued. They can be distinguished, as a rule, by the fact that their entrances are very narrow, rather below the level of the street, and have their door recesses painted green. When the bath is for women only, or a bath used alternately for either sex is appropriated at the time to women, a towel is hung across the door to warn men from entering. The attendants are then all women.

The entrance is always so built that you cannot see even into the reception-room, called *meslakh*.

In expensive baths this is rather a rich apartment, surrounded by broad couches or *liwāns* covered with white marble, one of which is spread with luxurious cushions for the richer patrons, while the others are merely covered with mats. Sometimes they have handsome gilt screens in front of the *liwāns*, with singing birds in gilt cages hanging from them. There is always a fine octagonal fountain made of stone, cased with white marble, in the centre. This is called the *faskiya*, and has quite a high jet of cold water playing in it.

Sometimes these *liwāns* rest on two arches, like the *suffels* in private houses; the slippers of the patrons are left under them.

In hot weather the bathers generally undress in the *meslakh*. In any case they take off their watches, purses, and other valuables, and give them in charge to the *m'allim* or keeper of the bath. An inferior servant takes the shoes and the pipe, or anything else which the patron may be carrying. Clogs are put on in the *meslakh*, because the rest of the bath is generally flooded.

In the winter the bathers undress in the first of the warm apartments, which is called the *beyt-owwal*. The word signifies first chamber. It is not so hot as the principal bathroom called the *harara*. In this ante-room there are generally two *mastabas* or benches, one higher than the other, intended for the more important patrons. The lower is generally large enough for two persons. If two important people happen to be there at the same time the lower *mastaba* is made as high as the other by the use of mattresses. A *seggada*, or small prayer-carpet, is spread on the *mastaba* for a person of high rank. The bather has several towels given him. In one of them he puts his clothes, and another, called the *mahzam*, he uses as a waist-cloth. Some bathers also twist a towel round their forehead and use other towels to cover their chests and back. The young man or boy who attends the bather while he is undressing is called the *lawingi* or

attendant of the *liwân*. When the bather has undressed and put on his towels the *lawingi* opens the door of the *harara* for him.

The *beyt-owwal* is paved and panelled with marble, and has marble benches, but it is small and has no architectural pretensions. The *harara*, on the other hand, in the best baths which I examined was sometimes quite a noble chamber, beautiful enough to be the baptistery of an antique basilica, from which probably the idea of it was taken. It is at any rate similar in ground plan to the Hall-of-Fêtes in a harem or a Kait Bey mosque, with the addition of a fountain. For it is a large square chamber, with a marble-paved square depression in the centre, surrounded by four marble-cased *liwâns*. And in the centre of the sunken pavement is a beautiful octagonal fountain of white marble with a high jet of very hot water. At the edges of the *liwâns* round the fountain are graceful pointed Moorish arches to carry the central dome, and there are other domes over the *liwâns*, generally of marble, with small glazed holes in them. One of these baths, from above, looks very like a Coptic church, owing to the number of its small domes. Lane speaks of the white marble of the *harara* being diversified with black marble and pieces of red tile. But I did not strike any baths with this additional decoration. They were beautiful enough without. The effect of the low-roofed hall, with its glistening white marble walls and floor and graceful arches surrounding the pretty fountain with its jet of steaming water under white marble domes, was at once delightful and full of the appearance of antiquity. I used to feel as if I were back in Pompeii in the days before its destruction, but in baths of marble sumptuousness to which the Pompeian did not aspire.

In another respect the place was full of the seeming of the ancient world, for the dark-skinned bathers sat about or lay about like slightly draped statues, and the attendants were all in native dress of classical simplicity.

Neither the attendants nor the bathers ever raised any objection to my wandering about the *hammam* taking notes.

They smiled courteously, and the attendant of course looked for his fee and accepted it. Yet I seldom had Ali there to keep me in countenance, for unless he and I were alone he remained outside to take charge of the ladies.

These visits to the *hammam* were full of impressions for the imagination. Everything went on as if no stranger were present. The beautiful octagonal fountain of the *harara* always had a broad marble rim, on which the bather sat about with nothing more than a waistcloth, and often quite nude, while the massager cracked his joints and kneaded his flesh or rasped the soles of his feet. Some people preferred to lie down on the *liwān* while their joints were cracked. I used to wonder how they survived it; the massagers used to crack every joint in the body; they even used to make the neck crack twice by twisting the head round first one way and then the other. Nobody's neck was ever broken while I was there. But I am sure mine would have been if I had let them try. That alone would have prevented me from bathing in a native *hammam* after I had seen the first. It seemed so funny to see quite important people having their ears twisted round until they cracked, by common bath attendants. Even that did not make me shudder like seeing patients having their feet rasped. The rasps were made of clay from Assyut I suppose, in the form of a crocodile or any other suitable beast; and those which were used for the feet of the common people were as rough as a bread-crumb grater, though those used for the upper classes were finer and smoother. I supposed that if you trudged about the streets barefoot your feet did get protuberances that needed a nutmeg-grater to remove them, but I did not understand how any foot less solid than a horse's hoof could stand those rough rasps.

All the bathers in the *harara* were in a profuse state of perspiration, and no wonder, for the room was heated with hot air, and a jet of nearly boiling water was playing from the *faskiya*, and in one if not two corners of the room there were smaller rooms containing tanks of the hottest water a human being could bear, called *maghtas*, for the bathers to plunge

into if they chose. The funny part was, that whenever one of these yellow people streaming with perspiration was going to get into the tank the attendant always dried him very carefully first with a sort of flannel bag. Perhaps he didn't want to spoil the water of the *maghtas*, which was several feet long, about a yard wide, and about a yard deep, extremely like, in shape and size, the small hot-water tank in the baths of Caracalla, in which one of the Emperors is said to have died.

Adjoining the *maghtas* is the *hanafiya*. Whether the bather has a dip in the tank or not, he has an important process to go through at the *hanafiya*, where the bathman lathers him with a sort of loofah and soap. Here you sometimes see the bathers having their armpits shaved. When the attendant has washed off the soap, he leaves the bather, who may stay on playing with the hot and cold taps of the *hanafiya*, which pour into a small trough with a seat in front of it. When he goes back to the *beyt-owwal* he is given four more towels, with which he wraps himself up and reclines on a couple of cushions, sipping coffee or smoking, while the *lawingi* rubs the soles of his feet and kneads his body and limbs. This operation generally takes about half an hour, and the bather then dresses and goes out, after the chief attendant has brought him a looking-glass and a comb, and restored him his money and valuables.

Judging from what I saw, I should say that the bath came rather expensive in the matter of tips, because the well-off bathers tipped each attendant.

I was told that men generally go twice a week to the bath, but that some of them are merely washed with soap and water and have a plunge into one of the tanks, which costs much less.

According to Lane, the women of his day were much more economical. They did not go to the baths so often, and when they went only had a soaping and a dip. They even took their own soap and praying-carpet and fresh water with them if the water in the *hanafiya* was too brackish to make a proper lather.

To the women, of course, the bath was much more of an event than to the men, for it was their chief outing. Lane says that they put on their jewels and their finest clothes, and entered into quite familiar conversation with anybody they met there, even if they were perfect strangers. They took fruits and sweetmeats and other refreshments with them and made no end of noise. And if they were ladies of position they took their own maids with them to wash them and perform the other operations for them. The baths, in fact, used to be, if they are not now, regular women's clubs, and a great place for mothers to choose wives for their sons, because they had such admirable opportunities for close inspection. The bath used to come in again when the marriage was actually in progress, for the lady and her friends used to hire the whole bath, or at any rate one of the apartments in which the *hanafiya* and the tank are contained. I forgot to say that they are lined with marble throughout, like the rest of the chambers in the great old baths.

Besides smoking in the bath, the women, especially when the whole bath was hired for a marriage, sometimes took the performing women called *almehs* with them to entertain them with singing of an amatory order.

Each bath has in its corner an enormous boiler for supplying it with hot air and hot water, and in the days before water companies used to be rendered even more picturesque by having a *sakiya* driven by an ox to pump up from a well the water for the establishment. Cairo is sufficiently near the infiltrating Nile to have any amount of well-water at the Nile level.

I have given so many details of the bathing processes that this chapter may read like a description of the origin of the Turkish bath. I can assure the reader that when I was in the baths I paid little heed to the processes, and thought more of the wonderful picture presented by these halls of antique marble, fountains and arches, made mystical as well as misty by the steaming waters, and filled with the appropriate figures to conjure up before my mind the baths of Pompeii. Thus must they have looked, when their fre-



quenter were pursuing their common idle round for want of more serious tasks, till Vesuvius suddenly descended upon them in ashes and put a cruel stop to their idyll of a Golden Age on that black day seventy-nine years after the coming of Christ, which was almost a symbol of the passing away of the pagan world.

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Two of the best old Arab *hammans* to visit are that on the right-hand side as you go down the Sharia Emir-el-Giyûchi just before you get to the Sharia El-Marguchi, which is a continuation of the Sharia En-Nahassin going towards the Bab-el-Futuh ; and the bath of the Emir Beshtak. This is in the Armourer's Sûk (Sûk Es-Sellaha) half way between the Merdani mosque and the Sharia Mohammed Ali near the corner of the little Sharia El-Khandur. Residents told me that this was considered the best in Cairo. Close to the El-Giyûchi bath is a very interesting and ancient-looking oil-mill worked by a *sakiya*.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### Roda Island and Moses

**I**F it were not for the ubiquitousness of the Jews of all nations in Cairo, Christians would have forgotten long ago about its original connection with the Chosen People, though his position as a saint in the Mohammedan calendar would have kept the memory of Moses green in the minds of the Arabs, in spite of the disappearance of the bulrush from the mud-banks of the Nile.

I have pointed out elsewhere, that as Cairo is the Arab capital, it was essential for the picturesque legend of Moses and the bulrushes to be located within a reasonable distance of that city, and the Island of Roda afforded the most promising locality. It had a mud shoal, upon which bulrushes may conceivably have grown in prehistoric times. It is not so near the chief sights and monuments of the capital as to be swamped by their superior attractions ; it is rather a favourite picnicking place. Your Mohammedan is more apt to combine picnics with religious celebrations than most people. The visit to the family tombs on the chief day of Bairam seems to the eye of the infidel Christian much more connected with eating and drinking than anything else. Therefore the Princess Bint-Anat, the Pharaoh's favourite daughter, and probably his wife also—some say that she stood in both these relations to Rameses the Great himself—had to find Moses's ark on some portion of that once-favoured isle.

I say advisedly once-favoured, because the pashas, in their hurry to reap unearned increment, allowed the Levantine



#### THE RETURN OF THE HOLY CARPET FROM MECCA

The reception of the Mahmal in which the carpet is conveyed, by the Khedive at his pavilion on the Place Mohamed Ali. The Mahmalis behind the first of the two white horses which are being ridden by policemen



A CORNER OF THE KHEDIVI'S PALACE

In front are two veiled figures in the ordinary costume of the poor Egyptian woman. The man in the foreground is wearing a *burnus* over his *galabiah*. But it is much more usual among the poor Cairenes to wear a jacket over the *galabiah* like the boy and man to his right.

speculator to tear most of their beautiful villas and gardens to pieces before he paid them the purchase-money; and as the slump came before he had time to clear out of his gambles, they never did get the money, and no one ever did build a mushroom suburb. Therefore a good deal of Roda looks like a Sudan town which had a visit from the Khalifa. But no matter. Roda will revive, for it has the good fortune to be on the alternative route from Cairo to the Pyramids, the only place to which the Cairene can drive to take the air.

My first acquaintance with Roda was before its famous bridge was opened. It was not a successful visit. Our friend the Major suggested that we should try and reach the nilometer on our feet instead of ferrying across from the usual point at Old Cairo. As it was our first day in Egypt, we did not know any better, and dismounted from the tram with alacrity opposite a sort of wooden foot-bridge which leads from the Mosque of Amr and its satellite Coptic *ders*, to somewhere about the centre of the island.

One of these *ders*, after defending the little Coptic convent in its core from Mohammedan outrages for unnumbered centuries, had succumbed to the attack of the building speculator, and its remains, in the form of mud-wall debris, were being carried across the bridge by camels to make some more building land at the expense of the Nile.

Those who are not familiar with Egypt cannot picture any more than we could, before we tried it, the horrors implied by this simple incident of modern civilisation. The debris of a mud house is bad under any circumstances, when it is dispersing itself in clouds of dust under the blazing Egyptian sun. But when it represents the dissolution of a building that may have stood a thousand years and been occupied by Copts all the while, and those Copts at once females and members of a religious order, the inferences are unutterable. Nothing dirtier can be imagined.

The means adopted for sowing the accumulated vermin with the widest effect was simple but efficacious. Each camel had a box slung on each side of his hump. Most of

the boxes had holes in them, none of them had lids. The camels swayed, as they will, shooting some of their cargo over the edges of the boxes and sifting more of it through the cracks. They barged into you as camels will. The bridge was not wide. But we did not know the chances we were taking, so we only swore at the suffocating clouds of dust, the most innocent part of the performance.

With these camels jostling us all round we made our way into the heart of Roda and tried to divine the direction, past the swamp they were converting into a building site, to the nilometer, till we struck a person who knew enough English to answer our questions—a policeman. He said he did not think we should ever find the way, and that the village had a bad name for its treatment of foreigners. He indicated excrescences among the palm-trees which were supposed to be the habitations of men. So we made our way back through that fusillade of dust-boxes to the tramway, and proceeded to the terminus at Old Cairo.

There we were pointed out a dirty, water-logged little Nile boat which would ferry us across to the nilometer. But we had had enough of the inhospitalities of Roda for that day, and took kodaks of the eccentricities of the Egyptian pauper instead, and the Egyptian pauper can be very eccentric at Old Cairo, where the restraining influences of public opinion are small, it being the special place where the Copts have led a hole-and-corner existence for about a thousand years.

When we learned what those camels were doing we imagined that the way in which we had been sprayed with vermin was an accident, so we determined to make a fresh expedition to visit Roda and the nilometer and Moses's Foundling Hospital. But it did not come off until our return from Khartûm. This was perhaps fortunate, for by that time we had become inured to the plagues of Egypt and able to sift the grains of beauty from the dust. And Roda is really very beautiful, but of that anon, when I have discussed the site of Moses's desertion.

It may be that Babylon—Bab-el-On—the Gate of On,

which was the Egyptian name of Heliopolis, really stood somewhere near the Roman Citadel, which at present bears the name, though the solitary obelisk which marks the site of Heliopolis is several miles away. Egyptians did things on a large scale: the temple enclosure of Karnak is a mile and a half round. But the Jews are supposed to have lived on the other side of Heliopolis, and the little ark to which the mother of Moses entrusted her goodly child, a boy, could not possibly have floated up-stream several miles against a current like the Nile's. Plausibility answers this argument by saying that the Israelites might have been building pyramids at Ghizeh for the Pharaoh. But it is hopeless to depend on facts in a case like this. Arabs make very good legends if you take them as they are, and do not subject them to unfair tests like these. Ebers for once is silent; he has no suggestion to offer as to the site, no legend to spin. Lane-Poole is no more accommodating. One thing we have to be thankful for is that no attempt has been made in print by indiscreet Christians to connect the abandonment of Moses with the human sacrifice in a crazy boat, which used to be made to the Nile when it began to rise, at the point where the canal which flowed through Cairo till the other day, left the river. It was this sacrifice, it will be remembered, which formed one of the most striking incidents in Sir H. Beerbohm Tree's wonderful presentation of *False Gods*. And it was opposite this point that Moses is said to have been found.

There is nothing that I regret more than not having seen Cairo in the days when the old canal flowed between the Arab city and the new city, on the line of the tramway which now crosses the Musky. A few of the old Mameluke mansions which towered over the rather pestiferous and mosquitiferous green waters with a riot of creepers and waving feathery palms still exist, with the entrances in the Sharia Es-Sureni. M. Bircher's, the best preserved Mameluke house in the city, is one of them. But they give no idea of the beauty of the stairways battered to picturesque decay, and the *meshrebiya* oriels, and pergola'd terraces, which used

to overhang the mirror of water and decayed vegetable matter. Health, I suppose, demanded its removal, but not the health of the Arabs, who positively enjoy the presence of stagnant water

This canal was only full for certain portions of the year. While the Nile was rising, its end opposite the Island of Roda was blocked with a stout earth-dam twenty-two feet high. When the river had risen to the official height of a full Nile this dam was cut with a gorgeous ceremony and universal rejoicing.

Fortunately Mr. Lane-Poole, one of the most picturesque as well as one of the most erudite writers about the unreformed and unrestored Cairo, has left us an inimitable account of the ceremony of cutting the canal.

"West of the Tûlûn mosque the canal makes a sharp angle, and then, resuming its south-westerly direction, enters the Nile close to Masr El-'Atika, or, as Europeans call it, 'Old Cairo.' The entrance of the canal (Fum El-Khalig) is opposite the Island of Rôda, where is the famous nilometer, or well for measuring the height of the inundation. Until the river has risen to the height of sixteen cubits in the nilometer, an old law enacts that no land-tax can be levied. The Government, however, of course used to take care to publish a falsified measurement before the due time, and thus induce the peasants to begin payment. Long before even this official date a public crier goes about, accompanied by a boy, announcing the portentous height of the river. 'God preserve the master of this house,' he cries, stopping before your door, 'and increase upon him His favours. O Bountiful, O God!' 'Ay, please God!' choruses the boy. 'God preserve to me my mistress, the chief lady among brides, such a one' (naming your wife, perhaps) 'for a long period! O Bountiful, O God!' 'Ay, please God!' from the boy. Then comes the information that the Nile is rising abundantly. 'Five digits to-day: and the Lord is bountiful!' To which the acolyte adds, 'Bless ye Mohammed!' to avert the possible effects of the evil eye. The people do not, however, pay much attention to the crier's daily announcements until the



last day before the Government proclamation of 'Full Nile,' which is to be signalled by cutting the dam of the canal and letting the river run in. On that day the crier goes about with additional pomp, accompanied by a crowd of little boys carrying coloured flags, and announces that it is now the *Wefu en-Nil* (Fullness of the Nile). 'The river hath given abundance,' he cries, 'and fulfilled its measure.' At which the boys shout, 'God hath given abundance.' 'The canals flow, and the vessels are afloat, and the hoarder of grain has failed—by permission of the Mighty, the Requirer,' etc., interrupted at each clause by the refrain of the boys, 'O-fallah!' 'God hath given abundance.' 'This is the annual custom,' continues the crier. 'God hath given abundance,' repeat the boys. 'And may you live to every year!' 'God hath given abundance!' 'And if the hoarder of grain wish for a scarcity'—'God hath given abundance!' 'May God visit him with blindness and affliction ere he dies!' 'God hath given abundance!' 'This generous person' (here the crier personally addresses himself to the master of the house before which he is standing) 'loveth the generous—an admirable palace is built for him in Paradise—and its columns are incomparable jewels—instead of palm-sticks and timber—and it has a thousand windows that open—and before every window is Selsebîl (the Fountain of the Blest)—Paradise is the abode of the generous—and hell is the abode of the niggardly.' In every pause the boys ejaculate, 'God hath given abundance!' 'May God not cause me to stop before the door of an avaricious woman, nor any avaricious man,' continues the crier sarcastically—'nor of one who measures water in a jar—nor who counts the bread while it is yet dough—and if a cake be wanting orders a fast—nor who shuts up the cats at supper time—nor who drives away the dogs upon the wall.' 'God hath given abundance!' echo the boys. 'The world is brightened, and the damsels have adorned themselves—and the old women tumble about—and the married man hath added to his wife eight others—and the bachelor hath married eighteen!' 'God hath given abundance!' By this time somebody, afraid of his scorn of

avarice, or cajoled by his flatteries and humour, has given a piastre or two to the crier, who then moves on to the next house.

"The adornment of the damsels, and the excitement of the old women, and the extravagances of bachelors and married men, find their crowning point in the festivities of cutting the earthen dam of the canal, which takes place on the following day. The dam has been standing ever since the rising of the Nile, and towers to a height of some twenty-two feet above the lowest level of the river. Some way off in front of the dam stands a round pillar of earth, resembling a truncated cone, which is called the '*artisa*, or 'Bride,' on the top of which a little maize or millet is sown. The demolition of the 'Bride of the Nile' by the rising tide is a special feature in the ceremonies of the season, and is doubtless a survival of some very ancient superstition. The Mohammedans, however, have their own explanation of its origin.

"It is believed that the custom of forming this '*artisa* arose from a superstitious usage, which is mentioned by Arab authors, and among them by El-Makrizy. This historian relates that in the year of the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, 'Amr ibn-El-Âsy, the Arab general, was told that the Egyptians were accustomed at the period when the Nile began to rise to deck a young virgin in gay apparel, and throw her into the river as a sacrifice, to ensure a plentiful inundation. This barbarous custom, it is said, he abolished, and the Nile, in consequence, did not rise in the least degree during a space of nearly three months after the usual period of the commencement of its increase. The people were greatly alarmed, thinking that a famine would certainly ensue. 'Amr therefore wrote to the Khalif to inform him of what he had done, and of the calamity with which Egypt was in consequence threatened. 'Omar returned a brief answer, expressing his approbation of 'Amr's conduct, and desiring him, upon the receipt of the letter, to throw a note which it enclosed into the Nile. The purport of this note was as follows: 'From 'Abd-Allah 'Omar,

Prince of the Faithful, to the Nile of Egypt. If thou flow of thine own accord, flow not; but if it be God, the One, the Mighty, who causeth thee to flow, we implore God, the One, the Mighty, to make thee flow.' 'Amr did as he was commanded, and the Nile, we are told, rose sixteen cubits in the following night.

"The evening before the cutting of the dam, the Nile about Roda becomes very gay and animated. Boats of all kinds and sizes bring visitors to witness the ceremony, and a great state barge, carrying cannon, and ornamented with lanterns and decorations, sails with much pomp from Bûlâk, and moors to the island opposite the entrance of the canal. The land is as fully peopled as the water; crowds gather on the mainland near Masr El-'Atika, and on the island, and tents are pitched for their shelter and refreshment. A Cairo crowd easily amuses itself; coffee and pipes will generally content it, and the mere prospect of something going to be done is enough to make it very happy. All that night nobody sleeps. If he wished to, the constant firing of guns from the big barge, the beating of drums on the other boats, the discharge of rockets and general babel of noises would render the desire abortive. But no one harbours so foolish a wish; the mere sight of the Nile that night is a scene out of fairyland. Boats gaily decked and covered with coloured lamps pass to and fro, their crews merrily dinning away at the *târ* and *dara-bukka*; every now and then a rocket flies up against the quiet stars, and the whole air is alive with sounds and sights of gaiety and innocent frolic. It is like Venice in the old carnival time, only the voices and dresses are changed, and we cannot help feeling that, like the carnival, this ceremony belongs to an older state of things and an older religion. As we gaze upon the crowd we feel dimly that the priest of Isis ought to be there.

"Early next morning the workmen are busy cutting away the dam, till only the thickness of a foot is left. Soon after sunrise the officials begin to appear; the Governor of Cairo rides up, the Kâdy reads a turgid document, a boat bearing

another officer is pushed through the mud wall, purses of gold are flung about, and the Nile is seen flowing rapidly between the banks of the Khalig, and rejoicing the hearts of the Cairenes who dwell beside it. Reserve and decency are thrown to the winds, and all the world goes bathing."

The day we did go over to Roda to see the nilometer we nearly succeeded in foundering on the way, though the water we had to cross was not as wide as most roads. It was such a very un-Nile-worthy craft, but all that could be expected perhaps as they charge you one piastre— $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per head—to take you there and back, and wait while you peruse the island.

Everything looked exceedingly picturesque, for the old Villa of Hassan Pasha which the jerry-builders did not succeed in demolishing, still spreads over the southern point of the island, with perishing pavilions and a wilderness of creeper-hung pergolas right over the nilometer. It was long since anybody had lived in it when we were there, and the writing of decay on the walls of that Pasha's pleasaunce was as plain as the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast. It was not greatly disfiguring, because the Arab has been rather cheap in his taste for a century or two. But his pergolas were as substantial and beautiful as garden woodwork ever was made—pavilions of plaited trellis fine enough to be the screens of mosques, though they were only to be inhabited and embraced by roses. The roses here have a veritable palace, with halls all round and halls leading up to the central pavilion, and in the garden plots between are fine palms and stately fruit trees, all, of course, left to perish at their wanton will. Perhaps ere these words are printed there will be nothing left growing but a few lean evergreens, and after-comers will be unable to picture it as we saw it, with clumps of banana trees, whose broad green fans could hardly hold the riot of huge purple flowers.

We wandered through garden and palace to lean over the terrace at the southern point for the finest view of the Nile in all Cairo. The view of Ghizeh's river-front across the Nile had a touch of the beauty and stateliness of Damietta,

the Egyptian Venice, and huge *gyassas* were flying up the Nile, looking like the great dark eagles of Egypt as they spread their two vast brown wings before the strong north wind. There was a shoal below us, on which we pictured the stranded Moses, though the spot selected by Arab tradition, marked by a white tree-trunk on the inner side of the opposite end of the island, facing the Kasr-el-Aini Hospital, is a more reasonable place for a raft made of reeds to strand.

We soon forgot about Moses, because at the end of the palace there was a delightful loggia of five arches, almost Chinese in its fantasticness, with a fountain sunk in the middle of its marble floor. Inside, too, the floors of the villa were of marble, and the ceilings vaulted and gaily painted in such great airy many-windowed rooms. We lingered, too, by a *sakiya* under a tamarisk, which a buffalo was slowing turning. The familiar groan of the *sakiya* was music to our ears, and a bit of garden like that border of tropical flowers where the hoopoes used to play at the Cataract Hotel at Assuan, held us spell-bound.

From the villa we went to a mosque, with its woodwork perishing, though not with years, which the loquat trees had invaded, as we were finding our way to the nilometer.

The *mikyās*, an Arabic word which only means measure, or nilometer of Roda, is the most beautiful of the many nilometers we saw between Damietta and the Blue Nile. It is not old enough to have been studied by the Pharaohs, who never came nearer to Cairo than Ghizeh or Heliopolis. It was established here at the beginning of the eighth century, about A.D. 716, when Memphis was fast falling into decay—perhaps for that reason—by the Governor of one of the Ommiyad Caliphs, and has been repaired at different dates from then to 1893. It consists of a square chamber, lined with stone, sunk to the proper level. In its centre there is an octagonal column which supports the architrave that runs across it, and it has, on three sides, exquisitely picturesque pointed arches rising out of the water. The masonry, at whatever date repaired, has naturally the appearance of high

antiquity, since it spends so much of its time beneath the water and mud of the Nile flood.

The pillar itself is the nilometer being marked with a scale of seventeen cubits, the ancient Arabic *dira* divided into twenty-four *kirat*. These cubits are madder than usual. It is bad enough that there are not two of the many nilometers of the Nile which have cubits of exactly the same length. Here the vagueness excels itself, because the cubits in this one nilometer are not all the same length. The ten uppermost are divided into twenty-four *kirat* each; the seven lowest are separated by a mere line. The nilometer does not fit the present Nile flood; but the bed of a river which brings down with it so much mud must have altered its levels frequently in the course of ages.

The nilometer, with its central column and antique-pointed lunettes and marble inscriptions, is mightily picturesque, though it is only eighteen feet square. Some of its inscriptions, which are Kufic, go back to the middle of the ninth century, and record repairs under the Abbaside Caliphs of that date. Others are passages from the Koran relating to the waters sent by God from heaven.

The object of nilometers was to help the authorities in determining how much taxation they could squeeze from the tillers of the soil.

Later on, when the Egyptian spring had curtained and carpeted every well-watered place with tangles of foliage and flowers, we paid another visit to Roda, to the fine old villa of a Syrian Bey, and saw what the old-time pleasaunces of Roda were like. The tall dark trees of the garden had their roots almost buried in flowers, and the spacious marble-floored halls were cities of refuge from sunrays worthy of the Homeric phrase, "The darts of Apollo." But we never found our way to the island mosque of Kait Bey, with its triple-balconied minaret, or the venerable mandura tree, called by the Arabs the *hakim-kebir*, or great physician, the tree to which Ebers says, "they make pilgrimages in order to be cured of fevers and other disorders. The devotees kneel down at its roots, and its boughs are thickly hung with frag-

ments of cloths of every description, the votive offerings of the sick and thank-offerings of the convalescent." Another German, more unpleasantly explicit, tells us that the rags on the trees are the actual bandages taken from the sores. At any rate, in Ebeis' time the tree was considered so sacred that the natives resented as sacrilege the idea of his artist drawing it

## CHAPTER XXVII

### The Old Coptic Churches in Cairo Itself

LARGELY owing to the visit supposed to have been paid by the Holy Family to the crypt of Abu Sarga, where, according to the sacristan they passed nearly the whole of their sojourn in Egypt, the shallowest sightseer in Cairo has heard of the Coptic churches of Babylon—Babylon being the Roman citadel in the purlieus of Old Cairo—and Old Cairo being a distinct portion of the city a couple of miles away from the rest, at the point on the Nile bank opposite the village of Ghizeh and the south end of Roda Island.

But no one who is not a student of archæology as well as an intelligent sightseer is likely to have ferreted out the two groups of old Coptic churches which are to be found in the native city between the line of the old canal and the Citadel. Both of these are ancient and interesting, and one of them has much of the beauty and quaintness of the Seven Churches of Babylon. I will take the less important churches of Mar Girgis and the Virgin, off the Haret er-Rûm first, because I can dismiss them more briefly, and because they are much less known. I had in fact very considerable difficulty in finding them. The best direction I can give is to make inquiries for them when you are at the Beit Gamal-ed-Din, the famous Arab mansion restored by the Wakfs, which every one goes to see as the typical Arab house of Cairo. This house, as every one knows, is situated in the Sharia Hoche Kadam, which runs off the Sharia El-Akkadin to the right as you go from the Bab-es-Zuweyla to the Turkish Bazar.



The name of the actual lane is the *Atfet-er-Rûm*. There are three Coptic religious establishments in this street, the two churches of the Virgin and St. George mentioned above, and the convent of St. Theodore (*Der Mari Todros*), which is said to contain about a dozen nuns, and has a chamber (according to Wilkinson) "noted for the cure of demoniacs and epileptics, with a bolster supposed to contain the bones of one of the arms of the saint, who is generally called by Copts and Moslems alike, *El-Amir Todros*." He said that it was hardly forty years ago since the ceremony of the casting out of devils was performed every Wednesday before the shrine of St. Theodore upon Mohammedan women, great numbers of whom used to come to be exorcised. But there were so many scandals in connection with it that the then Patriarch suppressed it.

I was unable to enter this convent, because we could not find the porter, but I went into the two churches. Both are ancient, though they have been restored, and their restoration, while not unintelligent or very disfiguring, makes their age uncertain.

The worst lane in the city of London does not wind so confusingly as the *Haret er-Rûm*, but I struck my churches eventually in the little *Atfet-er-Rûm* at the end by repeating "*Mar Girgis—Saint George*," till I addressed this Open Sesame to the actual sacristan of the churches—or one of them. He signed to us to wait in a court with a door in the *Damietta* style of woodwork while he got the key.

We went into the Church of the Virgin first. It was of the orthodox type, divided up by screens to separate the priests from the congregation and the men from the women, and at the east end were three *hekals*. *Hekals* are the Coptic apses, which are divided from the church by screens, generally hung with a quantity of small pictures. Behind them are altars in the form of plain cubes, which sometimes have fine antique baldachins. The centre apse here has a baldachin. This church has twelve little domes, which are the most distinguishing features of Coptic churches, and of course a baptistery.

When we left the Church of the Virgin we ascended a flight of steps and found ourselves in Mar Girgis—St. George's—which is divided into five compartments by four screens, the end one forming a very extensive baptistery, almost as long as St Mark's at Venice. The church has barrel roofs and domes, the dome over the pulpit being decorated with pendentives, and the screen which separates the *hekal* from the church being good. Numerous ostrich eggs and silver censers are swinging from the roof, and the *hekal* is decorated with little old pictures.

In the Haret Es-Zuweyla, behind the Sharia Es-Sureni near the Armenian church, are two other Coptic churches, far more interesting and of obvious antiquity, and a convent. Indeed, the Church of the Virgin here is considered to be the oldest in Cairo.

Like so many Coptic churches, it is under another church, the third dedicated to St. George which we have visited. We went there on Easter morning, the Coptic Easter morning, and were astonished at the amount of personal interest infused into the service, except by the women, who were squatting on the ground in a cage to the right and were not much in evidence. The men and children made up for their lukewarmness. Outside the church were a swarm of little *tarbushes* shouting *Kyrie Eleison*. Inside, the children were arranging five pink roses and a pot-pourri of rose-leaves on the niche in front of the altar, with a picture of the Crucifixion hanging over them and a big silver-gilt Gospel-case beside them between two candles. Then some turbaned men came in who were very agitated about something; their disputing was much more audible than the service; a person of inferior consideration was reading the lesson from a lectern covered with spots of purple velvet.

One of the turbaned men then began to shout very loud and threw things about at the little *tarbushes*, who sat down very hurriedly in a way that reminded us of Alice in Wonderland; the angry man then threw his slippers at the person who was reading the Holy Book, who simply observed *Ma'leesh!* The turbaned man then yelled at him in his fury, because the

lesson was not stopped. The reader went on with the lesson and an obligato of *ma'leesh, ma'leesh*. The service after this was stopped several times for the discussion. But the women did not appear to notice that anything was happening.


The Crucifix, which hung over the altar, had a serpent like the Pharaonic *uracus* represented on each side of it. The pulpit, which hung from the altar screen, was decorated with barbaric pictures. The Copts wear their fezes and turbans in church, and being of an economical turn of mind, if it is raining on the way frequently cover them with their handkerchiefs to save them from the wet, and seldom remember to remove them when they enter the church.

The whole thing struck me as disgracefully undignified, and seemed to justify the strictures of Ebers, though we did not see any one supporting themselves on crutches.

"The first time we enter a *keeneeseh* we are shocked to see so large a number of men supporting themselves on crutches, but we are relieved to learn that the Kopt, who is obliged to stand all through a service, that is often interminably long, uses these supports to save himself from being worn out with fatigue. Our companion kisses the priest's hand, as does each one that comes in, bends the knee before the pictures of the saints, and then remains standing near us among his co-religionists, who pay so little heed to the service that they eagerly discuss all sorts of worldly business; but in fact the Koptic chant is understood by none of the congregation, and only in a very few instances by the priests, and it is performed solely and entirely by a few clerks and schoolboys. In the women's division of the church, where many faces of great beauty may be seen, the chattering and squabbling are so loud that even individual voices and words can be distinguished, and when at last a child begins to cry, the priest is obliged to make a raid upon them, and command silence.

"We are beginning to envy our neighbour the use of his crutch; for although the odious medley of gossip, singing, and bell-tinkling, which the Kopts call divine service, had begun fully two hours before we arrived, we have stood

through more than a hour of it before the chief ceremonies begin. The high-priest, a fine-looking old man, now comes out of the *heykel*, and walks about among the congregation swinging a censer, and laying his hand on the head of those nearest to him—on ours among others.

"Nothing approaching to sincere devotion is to be seen in any faces but those which bow under his favour; and, indeed, what is more worthy of veneration than an old man's blessing? Still, not a Kopt quits the church; for the Lord's Supper is administered—in a way, indeed, which it is painful to remember. Instead of wafers, small cakes stamped with a Koptic cross  are distributed, and the priest, after washing his hands, partakes of the bread and wine both together, breaking the bread into the wine, and eating the sop with a spoon. He also offers a spoonful to such of the laymen as are near the *heykel*. Finally, that no particle may be lost of the sacred elements that represent the body and blood of Christ, the priest fills the cup with water, rinses it round, and after pouring it over his hands, drinks it up. Verily, as this unclean fluid is to pure wine, so is Koptic Christianity to the other creeds of Christendom. Before we quite the *keeneeseh* alms are collected for the poor, and we also are expected to give. I took no part in the love-feast, which closed the ceremony, and which, in the early days of Christianity, was so full of sacred fellowship and significance. I assisted at it once at Luksor, and saw my fellow-Christians buy fresh bread, hot from the oven, and share it amid much bargaining and quarrelling. On that occasion a brawl took place in front of the church, and was particularly horrible as occurring in such a spot. But alas! these communities have retained little of Christianity but the name, and though their members fast most conscientiously, and devote more time to the services of the Church than any other sect, the true spirit of their faith is wholly wanting, and it is not surprising that, in Upper Egypt particularly, all the noblest and best elements of the Koptic community have been diverted and absorbed into other confessions."

The church itself, with its carved screen black with age

and extraordinary crucifix and pictures, was striking enough. But a Copt of the better class who spoke good English was obviously distressed at our witnessing that unseemly scene, and begged us to go with him into the lower church, which, he said, was much older and more beautiful. In it the service was being conducted more impressively. An old man was reading from a grandly illuminated Gospel by the light of two feeble candles, whose flickering flames were reflected on the old brass-work and the unlit lamps which were hanging from the altar screen. Here, too, the crucifix was buried in roses. There was a grand crystal chandelier, but it was not being used, and the church was very dark, and the principal part of the service was being conducted by a choir of very small boys. The gentleman who brought us down tried in vain to explain the Coptic services, though he spoke very good English, so the instant the old man had done reading the Gospel he hurried us up to the lectern to examine the book, which had grandly illuminated initial letters, and which he found, on looking at the title-page—at the end of the book, I think—to be over three hundred years old. While he was hunting for the title-page he blew out one of the candles and put it into the superbly illuminated volume to keep the place.

The church had not so many ancient and splendid features as the churches of Old Cairo, so it did not take so long to examine. He showed us all over it, and laughed and talked quite loudly as he tried to explain things to us all the time the service was going on. And when he found that there was nothing more to interest us, he took us up into the convent. There was one quite decent-looking room, though very plainly furnished, where he introduced us to an old lady who looked like a respectable servant, as the abbess. She told him to take us over the convent, the rest of which looked like the worst sort of Greek hotel in a place like Damietta. It was simply a collection of dirty rooms, with dirty women huddling in them on earthen floors, most of which seemed to be used as kitchens of the humblest sort, judging by the litter of dirty cooking-pots and food. They were all extremely

polite and cordial. But the convent had nothing to dignify it. It was simply a poor living-place for women united by a rule of the loosest order.

We made one other incursion into a Coptic church, and there we felt some of the exultation which filled us the day we went over the glorious Hanging Church of Babylon for the first time. For that was the Cathedral which we attended at the great Easter Eve service. The Copts seemed to make more of the eve than of the day itself.

The Cathedral was filled with an immense crowd. If it were not for the screen, it would have looked like a very Evangelical English church. But behind the rich screen, hung with flashing ikons we saw glimpses of all manner of splendid mysteries. As we took our seats, two men in white, wearing crimson-and-gold crosses, were reading something at the lectern together. The voice in which they read was almost a scream. The lower part of the church was packed with *tarbushes*. Most, but not all, of the women were behind grills in the gallery. It is possible that those who were below belonged to other religions, like the ladies of our party. The Greeks and Copts attend each other's Easter services, which do not clash, the great Easter service in the Greek cathedral taking place at the conclusion of the service in the Coptic cathedral. The great church was brilliantly lit with vast crystal chandeliers, and from the gaily lighted recess behind the screen came an incessant tinkling of cymbals and cloud after cloud of incense. In front of the screen sat personages with crowned heads, and after a long period of tinkling and intoning and the reading of a sort of lesson, two most important-looking personages in coifs like Venetian doges and doges' gowns, one of cloth-of-gold and one of crimson velvet, made their appearance, which was the signal for indescribable enthusiasm and shouting and crooning, until a procession of acolytes, also wearing crowns and carrying lighted tapers, drew up in a line outside the screen.

Round the entrance to the screen, which was half filled up by a picture of the Resurrection, was a band of beautiful

little boys in white robes with crimson caps and crimson and gold crowns, and presently the chief priest in magnificent robes made his appearance in their centre. This was the signal for excellent chanting to begin and for the procession to move round the church to show the reconciliation of Earth and Heaven. A large image was carried round the church with banners and lights, which typified in some way the raising of Christ. So we understood from the Principal of the chief Coptic school, who sat next to us and was very kind in trying to explain things to us. We knew then that the gentleman, who had tried to explain things to us at the other Coptic church, had had a harder task than we imagined. The Coptic ritual is very difficult for Protestants to understand. We learnt from him that the brazen serpent which we noticed in all the Coptic churches was the emblem of the Patriarch.

The Patriarch, who is highly respected in Cairo by the Christians of every sect, should have headed this procession three times round the church, but he was an old man and not equal to the exertion. The procession was quite a small one; it consisted only of two banners, a few choristers with tapers, chanting, and three priests in splendid robes not unlike those of *bedawin* sheikhs. Three sacred pictures were also carried in the procession, which takes place every Sunday for fifty days after Easter. The service must go on until after midnight—it goes on till about half-past twelve—because the Bible tells us that Christ rose very early in the morning.

A young man then read what our Coptic schoolmaster friend called a speech, but which we should call a sermon, to show that Christ was sent for the salvation of men. And then came a most picturesque ceremony. Three times the screen was rapped by a priest just beside the entrance, to typify Christ knocking to come in. It recalled to me, and I suppose to the Copts, those splendid verses in the twenty-fourth psalm:

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

"Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

"Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah."

Clouds of incense rolled forth meanwhile, and then a priest cried out (our schoolmaster friend translating to us): "Now rise and stand in the fear of God, to hear the Gospel read by the venerable Patriarch in Coptic."

It seemed to me a little unfortunate that after this majestic announcement the venerable Patriarch should not feel equal to reading it, but should order a Priest, in quite matter-of-fact tones, to do it for him.

But the scene was a splendid one, for the priest who took his place was one of those who were wearing those splendid robes like a *bedawin* sheikh. And as he stood at the reading-desk between the flickering candles he was silhouetted against the screen, with its glittering ikons, under that vast crystal chandelier which bounded our view.

The boys crowded up the pulpit stairs while this was going on, and while a blind man read something in Arabic from a blind man's book for a reason which the schoolmaster could not make clear to me. I hoped that his school was able to follow him better than I could.

The service was now drawing to an end, and he recommended us to go on to the Greek church. The Copts and Greeks, he told us, differ only in one dogma. They are allowed to pray in each other's churches by their religions.

We drove off as quickly as we could to the Greek cathedral, which lies behind the Musky on the right-hand side just off the long street which ends rather picturesquely in the Scent-makers' bazar. Long before we could get near it, we had to dismount from our *arabeah* and proceed on foot past the stalls where they were selling candles and fireworks for the celebration. The fireworks were presumably for use outside. But the Greeks are very indiscreet at Easter time, and were letting off revolvers in a most alarming way in the street



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to show their joy at the Resurrection ; so there is no saying where a Greek might not let off a firework at such a time. We felt a little timid about going into the Greek cathedral on such an occasion : it was nearly one o'clock in the morning. But we need not have disturbed ourselves, for we had got no farther than the open court in front of the cathedral when we were involved in a crowd from which it seemed impossible for any human being to emerge alive. So we turned tail, and it took us an hour doing it.

We had, however, already seen the Greek cathedral, which would be like an up-to-date Nonconformist church if it were not for the ikon-hung screen and for the numerous pictures, of no artistic merit whatever, with which the walls and columns are hung. The courtyard is, however, fine and picturesque, but not good enough to make up for the inferiority of the present cathedral to the glorious and ancient Greek Church of St. George at Old Cairo, which has just been so admirably restored.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Rod-el-Farag and Shubra

**R**OD-EL-FARAG is the grain port of Cairo, and Shubra was until recently the garden suburb, in which pashas, and other rich people, had palace-like villas surrounded by gardens of deep tropical verdure. The very extensiveness of these gardens proved their downfall. It offered such opportunities to the jerry-builder, and pashas were not a class who let sentimental considerations weigh with them. Nor indeed did many of them let business considerations weigh with them sufficiently to secure the price of the estates, with which they were parting, before the speculator grubbed up their gardens and marked them out in allotments. They were so ruthlessly dug up that if seeds were supplied with sufficient lavishness, quite wonderful agricultural results might be produced.

To get to Rod-el-Farag and Shubra, you have to cross a very steep bridge behind the railway station in the tram. At first you pass some rather nice houses, but the road soon hurries into chopped-up patches of building-land, from which you take some time to escape if you are in the Rod-el-Farag tram.

Rod-el-Farag is a place of no beauty. You only go to it to see some interesting phases of native life, and to be reminded of the infinitely more picturesque grain port at Assuan. The buildings are low and mean, the side walks and even the road, except that part over which tramways fly at short intervals, are occupied by people who have been grain-porters and are now asleep. As the



A JAR-SILLER'S SHOP AT ROD-LL-FARAG, THE GRAIN PORT OF CAIRO



STREET ARABS AND GRAIN SACKS AT ROD-EL-FARAG, THE GRAIN PORT OF CAIRO.  
The children's clothes are made of the same material as the sacks.

ostrich buries his head in the sand and considers himself safe, the Egyptian covers his head and considers all the world his bed. Just before you come to the port you pass some large sunken sheds full of incubators hatching chickens. It cannot be because they get their food at wholesale price, but it is difficult to know for what other reason chicken-incubating should be an industry at Rod-el-Farag, where there are so many of the chicken-stealing class. Rod-el-Farag is, in fact, a thoroughly low place, with the usual low people who hang about a port, and a few low dancing-booths.

The most picturesque thing about the port is the gay sacking of which the grain-bags are made. This is extremely pretty—a sort of matting with a biscuit-coloured ground and elegant conventional patters in dark brown—quite ancient Egyptian. All day long you see carts and trolleys being piled up with these gaily patterned grain-bags; all day long you see porters staggering under huge burdens from the big grain boats moored against the bank so closely that their masts make quite a forest.

The booths in which the grain-dealers do their weighing and buying and selling are also quite picturesque. They are like the sheds of the Palermo fish-dealers along the Marina near the Piedigrotta church on that matchless harbour, or fancy boat-houses on the Thames.

The view up the Nile broadening out for its island is, however, majestically beautiful, and the tall *gyassas* coming up the stream before the stiff north wind, or dropping down the swift current to their moorings against the shore, complete the picture. They come laden in bulk and are moored to the shore by their noses, from which planks are put out to the high bank. Along these narrow, rickety planks the marvellous Egyptian porters stagger under prodigious burdens, but they never miss their footing as they carry the yellow grain to those quaint, creeper-covered sheds in which the Levantine grain-dealer is enthroned. In the middle of it all, the porters who have no burden to carry, and the children, are playing cards.

In such a busy neighbourhood of course there are the usual porters' restaurants, and lettuce-carts with their frames as elaborately carved as Sicilian carts, and men in a species of sentry-boxes to protect them from the sun as they sell the public water from the tap. Here too you see so many men's heads tied up in large red cotton handkerchiefs instead of hats, that you recognise how very African the Sicilian peasant is in his appearance.

The peripatetic water-seller is much in evidence here too, walking about with a gorgeous brass essence-bottle with a tapering spout, a water pitcher, and a couple of brass saucers, which are as tuneful as bells when he clinks them together.

And here too are photographers in shabby booths, which seem to be knocked up out of packing-cases, who take and finish your photograph in about five minutes for about fivepence. Why do they always want to take your photograph on waste land? There are innumerable unemployed porters hanging about Rod-el-Farag, but I never saw any of them killing time by having their photographs taken.

The drive along the Shubra road to the Shubra palace of Hassan Pasha, the Khedive's uncle, was formerly the Hyde Park drive of Cairo. But nowadays people drive out to Ghezira and the Pyramids instead. The road is longer at any rate; and poor Shubra is shorn of its glory, for villa after villa has gone under to the jerry-builder, though few of his abominable creations have risen upon their dust. There are still, however, a few left to show what these Cairo paradises were like. As architecture they did not count for much; they were huge, loosely rectangular Italian villas, without any of the graces of a Cardinal's summer palace to the outward eye, but doubtless cool, and all that could be coveted by the master of a harem, within. They were surrounded by gardens, in which the chief element was shade and the most decorative features were palm-trees. Some of them were rich in warm-climate fruit trees, such as oranges and bananas and prickly pears. Nearly all of them had fig-trees. The prickly pears, having an enormous deal of

vitality, dispute the sites with the dust-heaps and gaping cellars.

But there are a good many gardens still overrun with vegetation, and one of the three great Khedivial schools, which come nearest to our own public schools, stands at the beginning of the road and makes that part tolerably safe from the land-boomer.

The palace and gardens of Shubra were constructed for Mehemet Ali, whose favourite residence it was. But the palace was almost rebuilt by his son, Halim Pasha. At the time it was built the great fountain was considered one of the wonders of Egypt. People could do nothing but talk about the immense marble basin deep enough to swim in, surrounded by marble balustrades, and with gorgeous kiosks projecting over it from the covered corridor which ran all round it; and a pavilion at each corner provided with luxurious divans.

Halim Pasha was equally proud of another kiosk at the other side of the gardens, which he called the hill—El-Gebel—more in the style of the famous kiosk in the park at Tunis, consisting of a single chamber, paved with Oriental alabaster and having a fountain in the centre, which rose above tiers of terraces planted with flowers and commanded a view over the whole park, the Nile, and the distant mountains.

Prince Hassan's garden was famous for its roses and for its elaborate Arab pergolas of carved trellis work, covered with creepers. It commands one of the best views of the Citadel and the Pyramids.

## PART II

### COUNTRY LIFE ROUND CAIRO

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#### CHAPTER XXIX

#### On the Humours of the Desert

"THE desert; there is nothing in it," said my witty friend R. H. S., and he was right or wrong according as you take it—I mean the desert. If you are trying to strike a bee-line across it to an oasis, or as Baird's army crossed it, in their famous march to join Abercromby, who had already won the victory which terminated the French occupation of Egypt, and was dead, R. H. S. was right. You might never see a living thing, and hardly a trace of human interference, except the bones of a camel which had died by the way. But from another point of view he was hopelessly wrong; all the monuments of Ancient Egypt are in, or just on the edge of, the desert, for the builders had to keep above the inundation level of the Nile; and every acre which is not flooded or irrigated is desert.

Observed from the deck of a luxurious Cook's steamer running up the Nile on a pleasure-trip, the desert is a thing of infinite and innumerable beauties; you can see something of it on both sides nearly all the time. The strip of cultivated land which constitutes Egypt is mighty narrow, and it is bounded by the Arabian hills on one side and the Libyan hills on the other, both of which are sheer unredeemed desert—hot boulders sticking out of hot sand, which take on the loveliest



tints of rose or azure according as the sun is on them or behind them.

The desert often comes down to the very edge of the river, where there are rocks.

The place from which most people see the desert is the Pyramids—just as good a bit as they are likely to see unless they go to the Great Oasis or Khartûm, which means their spending a whole day in training across a desert without one living thing in it away from the station-master's reed huts.

What is the desert like? It is what the bottom of the sea would be like, if the waters parted once more, as they did on its eastern edge, for the Israelites to pass over and Pharaoh to be caught by the returning tide—an undulating bed of rock and sand. The sand is pale gold at the Pyramids, and grows deeper and deeper gold as you go farther and farther south. At Abû Simbel, near the border line of Egypt and the Sudan, the sand is almost the colour of an orange.

The main characteristic of the desert is moving sand, which drifts round protuberances at the will of the wind. Old desert watchers tell you that there is no drift in the desert without a core of some sort; and the sand sometimes gets blown off the desert altogether, for a few acres, where it is flat, revealing a clay or rock floor. I have ridden on bare clay in the desert round the Great Oasis. It was strewn with the debris of the flints worked thousands of years before our age.

But in the main the desert consists of sand, deep sand, too soft for man or ass to walk on in comfort—the country for which Nature provided the camel with wonderful sand-shoe feet.

The surface of the desert is very uneven: hills, cliffs, and boulders abound in it. All the quarries as well as all the tombs of Egypt are in the desert; the connection between a quarry and a tomb was often very intimate; the most valuable quarries of all, those from which the purple porphyry of the ancient world, which gave purple its name, was hewn, are as good as buried by the hundred miles of desert which surround them. And near Cairo there is a city of the quarries of the Pharaohs more wonderful than the catacombs in the

architecture of its galleries, and the number and beauty and preservation of its inscriptions.

But the desert is generally more like the hummocks between golf-links and the sea, except that there are no *bents* (the Scotch for rushes). The sand is sometimes spread flat, sometimes in tiresome little hills. It is too soft to walk on with any comfort, but is ideal to lie in when you are not exposed to the sun by day, or the dew and frost by night. It is generally bitterly hot by day and bitterly cold by night.

The ancient Egyptian was a better judge of a desert than Sven Hedin's Central Asiatic. He knew just how far he could go with the desert; he did not build cities in the middle of it for the sandstorm, the land-spout, to bury alive like an eruption of Vesuvius. He only made his tombs in it; he was anxious to screen them from the observation of coming generations, because Egyptians thought tombs fair game for the collector after such a very short day of grace. He hewed out his tombs in the rock below the desert, and concealed the entrance as carefully as he could, generally making a false entrance or two, and the winds of the desert obliterated all signs of his handiwork more effectively than the spider of the Bruce.

His temples, except in the oases, were always within sight of the Nile; the strip of desert, which separates them from the river now, was probably all irrigated and cultivated in those more civilised days.

The desert is well named. It is very deserted. When we were crossing the desert between Kharga Landing and Kharga Oasis we did not see a living thing except flies, and they would not have been there if there had not been a train to take them. When you have journeyed a little way into the desert, the flies disappear: they know its inhospitality as well as other animals do. The fringes of the desert within reach of feeding grounds are beloved by wild animals. It provides ideal dens and fastnesses. You see gazelle as you approach the Nile, between Halfa and Khartûm; you hear jackals at the Pyramids; the hyænas come and eat your stores in the desert camp near Assuan; even the cerastes, the wicked little

horned viper of Egypt, which killed the superb Cleopatra, and which Nature has clothed in the colour of the desert, keeps near its edges, the birds of the air as well as the reptiles under the earth dread its depths. We did not see one bird as we were crossing the desert to the Great Oasis.

The mineral world is not so chary. Not only does the desert abound in valuable quarries—there are portions of it like this very portion which I have been describing, which abound in mines worked by the ancients for gold and manganese and flints and the precious cobalt.

The true desert has no vegetation. The border plants are the gigantic spurge, which bears the refreshing-looking but hollow Dead Sea Fruit, and the Bitter Apple, a gourd whose vine dies away in the heat, leaving golden fruit, like sugar melons, on the sand.

Any vegetation beyond this indicates the presence of water; and where there is water there is no true desert. The desert would run down to the Nile for nearly its entire course, were it not that, within reach of the Nile, it can almost always be cultivated, if it is only with castor-oil plants.

The desert is Nature's paint-box. Round the Great Oasis you find all manner of stones, hued like the rainbow, which grind up into the paints used by the ancient Egyptian in frescoing his miles of tombs and acres of temples.

It seems verily that the desert is only a deserted place, for Captain Young, late Governor of Halfa, has discovered that with some surface-shifting and well-sinking the whole desert between Halfa and Khartûm could be put under crops. There is water between fifty and sixty feet of the surface.

I am not so surprised at that, for it is a nice, genial-looking desert, with the same sort of sands as you get at Paignton or Tenby, decoratively backgrounded with pyramids (as at Merâwi—the ancient Meroe) or mountains that look like pyramids.

But the desert you pass in going to the Oasis is a real savage bandit of a desert, with fierce cliffs, overwhelming waves of sand, and plains of alkali white as the snow and saltier than the sea. At first it is mild-looking enough, with

its flat sands strewn with round boulders like Dutch cheeses ; the precipices of chalk which succeed, if they look dry to you as a belated traveller, nevertheless suggest home to you as a wandering Briton ; but the black, aqueous rocks, just before you reach your haven in the Oasis, are like the dreariest fields of lava in the waste places of Mount Etna.

Though the desert is a disagreeable thing to cross, it is a handy thing to have near a large town, for it contains a ready-made cemetery and ready-made golf-links, a ready-made polo-ground, a ready-made racecourse, and a ready-made Rotten Row, not to mention parade grounds, Bishareen camps, and that sort of thing. Assuan could not have been made a Cannes, or Khartûm a Washington with the stroke of a pen if it had not been for the largess of the desert. In fact, the desert serves all the purposes of the sea in Upper Egypt. Helwân, the favourite week-end resort for Cairo, is like a new seaside village dropped into the desert. People talk of desert air instead of sea-breezes ; if auctioneers want to lay out new city sites, like that melancholy pleasure-city, the modern Heliopolis, they buy a bit of the desert. If an irrigation company wishes to reclaim land for cultivation, it buys a bit of the desert. The desert is the park of every Egyptian town. And, finally, the desert is Egypt, for Egypt is like a village with one long street—the street being the Nile.

Nobody in Egypt talks of the desert as a devouring fiend, though whole expeditions, from the army of Cambyzes the Persian, to the sergeant's party bound for the Wady Natron, have perished by the way in its serpentine embrace. Perhaps, like the dwellers on Etna and Stromboli, they have grown too accustomed to it. Alexandria is about the only place in Egypt where it does not come up to the back door. At Cairo you could motor to it in five minutes if you found the streets empty. There are still places like Siwa and Sinai, which you can only reach by days and days of camel-riding across the desert. The army goes and manœuvres in it, because there are no crops to trample down, and comes back saying that it is as cold as hell—by night, and the converse

by day. Civilians go and camp out in it and, if they are French, try to shoot a jackal for honour and glory. The Arabs make an Earl's Court Exhibition of it. They put on their beautiful robes (fancy dresses in themselves) and show you round the Pyramids and the Sphinx—they even charge admissions at a fixed tariff. If you wish to camp out, whether it is beside the Sphinx or half-way to Siwa, they let you tents like lodgings, and act as landlady and lodging-house slavey and courier and policeman rolled into one; they run to the desert like chickens to an old hen whenever they are in trouble. The desert is the raw material from which Egypt was manufactured, and the dust to which she would return if the Nationalists had the management of her for long.

## CHAPTER XXX

### On the Pyramids

"Their size<sup>1</sup> alone and their form remains. Stripped of their brilliant white, smooth casing, once covered with strange carvings and paintings, bereft of the huge precincts and stone gateways, they appear barbarous, rude, rugged, almost meaningless shapes of forgotten power. And the Sphinx is more wonderful, more mysterious still—Horemku the ancient. No one can tell when the Sphinx came into being. There is a legend that it was in existence at the time when Chephren built his pyramid. Thothmes IV. cleared away the sand in which it was buried, at the command—given in a dream—of Harmachis, who claimed that it was his statue. Probably a far greater antiquity belongs to it, for Princess Honitsen, daughter of Cheops (builder of the Great Pyramid), speaks in an inscription on a stele, of a 'Temple of the Sphinx' as existing in her day.

"We see the Sphinx now defaced and mutilated, though Arab writers speak of its once strangely beautiful features. A suggestion as to this is that perhaps it is the sole survivor of a more ancient civilisation still, far beyond our ken, for the Egyptian craftsmen whom we know did not aim at beauty in itself: tied by convention, the keynote of their work was grandeur—immensity that disclaimed proportion. And yet, there, close to their most ancient monuments, is that figure, perfect in proportion, form, and line, and once in beauty a deeper, more mystical symbol than their most cunning gravings, more real in life than their most immense statues."—RENÉ FRANCIS.

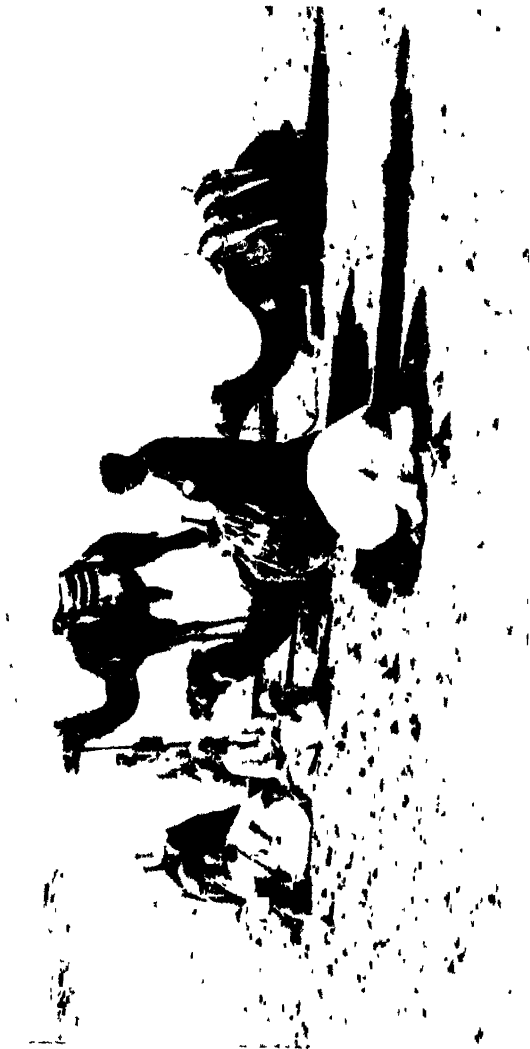
THE Pyramids are to Cairo what the Forum is to Rome. They are of the highest beauty, and the highest antiquity. It is as impossible not to be astonished by the Pyramids as it is impossible not to be astonished by the

<sup>1</sup> According to Dr. Budge, in Cook's *Handbook for Egypt*, the Great Pyramid, that of Cheops, measures 775 feet along each of its four sides, and, though it has lost 30 feet of its height, is still 451 feet high; it contains 85,000,000 cubit feet of stone, and has a hall inside it more than 150 feet long and nearly 30 feet high. The second Pyramid is about 700 feet along each side, and is one foot lower than the other. The third Pyramid is 350 feet along each side, and about 210 feet high.



THE SPHINX BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND PYRAMIDS.

From a photograph taken by the Author about 6 A.M., after sleeping at the foot of the Sphinx.



GROUP OF ARABS AND CAMELS IN THE DESERT NEAR THE PYRAMIDS OF GIZEH

The Arab in front is saying his prayers



Falls of Niagara or the Dam of Assuan, and you can see the great pyramids of Gizeh, which to most people stand for all the pyramids, from any eminence in Cairo.

There are dozens of other pyramids—from Helwân, near Cairo, you can see five groups of pyramids. Near Cairo alone, you can ride from pyramid to pyramid for seventy miles on end, without ever being out of sight of pyramids. These constitute the most northerly "pyramid field."

There is a field of tall, slender pyramids as far south as Mcrâwi, which is in the Sudan, at no great distance from Khartûm. And we climbed a curious mud pyramid, supposed to have been built by the Israelites, in the Fayûm. I photographed one of its mud bricks, half a yard or two feet long, which showed the straw so plainly that it came out in the kodak, so it must have been built before the Israelites were asked to make bricks without straw

What were my first impressions of the Pyramids? They began on my first evening in Cairo, when a fiery Egyptian sunset lured me to the Citadel.

You don't need to go to the Pyramids to be familiar with their comic side, for it has been so inimitably described with pen and paint-brush by Mr. Lance Thackeray—the John Leech of tourist life in Egypt. You can see people climbing the Great Pyramid as they do climb it, shovelled up by the Pyramid Arabs; you can see the head of the Sphinx as it looks from behind, very like the head of a battred ginger-beer bottle; and tourists as they look on donkeys and camels in their Nile extravaganza clothes; you can see the same caricatures on camels and donkeys being photographed with the Pyramids and the Sphinx in the background, "to confirm their position as bona-fide travellers and impress their poor relations"; and you can see the road to the Pyramids, that causeway running across the vast lake of the inundation, with chasing donkey-boys in fluttering blue night-shirts, and meek donkeys crawling in front of lorries laden with black-veiled humpty-dumpties of women—the native form of omnibus.

As I stood on the terrace by Mehemet Ali's mosque,

I saw, behind the procession of black minarets, a long bar of dark red fire, which threw them up into bold relief. Suddenly my eye detected, along that bar of sunset glow and sand-haze, the twin triangles, with the smaller triangle beside them, which had been familiar to me from my childhood, looking infinitely clear, impossibly near.

I had no idea that the Pyramids were within sight of Cairo. "The Pyramids," I cried, as the survivors of Xenophon's Ten Thousand cried out, "The sea, the sea," when they saw the goal of their long march across Asia Minor.

On the very next day I went out to touch them with my hands, these first-fruits of the world's architecture. I went in the early afternoon, as soon as the Nile Bridge could be crossed. I was plunging right into the heart of things Egyptian; for I arrived at the Nile while the swing-bridge was still open, and the tall *gyassas* were jostling each other in their anxiety to be through.

What could be more Egyptian than the scene which met my eyes? For the square at the end of the bridge was filled with a patch as close-packed as new-born caterpillars, of carriages, carts, camels, donkeys, motors, and pedestrians of two colours and continents. As usual, the food-stalls, and sweetmeat stalls, water-sellers and orange-sellers, made their appearance. The trim mounted-police, most of them for this job Englishmen, swaggered up and down on their white Arabs; the foot-police, tall, slender, black figures, mingled with the crowd: anxiety was written on their faces. The foot-policeman is reminiscent of the old Courbash days, and is never at ease unless he has something to beat the crowd with. Outside of the great semi-European towns he always does beat the crowd, generally about the head. The crowd jammed, as the *gyassas* had jammed in the river below, in their anxiety to get through before the turn-bridge swung round again, shutting them out for another twenty-four hours.

When at length the turn-bridge did swing round again, the foot-passengers began to flow over it long before it was adjusted; the officious police saw no objection to this. We

left the horse and motor traffic still congested—it had got out of hand—and, passing between the lions, found ourselves, as the crowd carried us along, gazing through the railings at the noble and historic stream. The swift waters, now brown, now purple to the eye, were cleft by the flotilla of Arab merchantmen spreading their tall white wings to the favouring wind. The Nile is truly beneficent. It feeds and supports all Egypt, and it always has a swift wind to take commerce upstream, and a swift current to float it down. The bridge opened out on to another square, always humming with life, for here all the roads of the Ghezira, the island of the Nile so dear to the pleasure-seekers in hot Cairo, meet the great road from Gizeh, and the Pyramids, which is kept in repair for the motorist. The square bristles with cabs and donkeys.

On the far side, by the smiling public garden, the congregation of vendors of fruit and bread and water showed where trams started for the Pyramids.

Kodaks are very busy here, for a new species of Arab makes his appearance—suave, strikingly handsome, arrayed in robes of spotless white, able to converse with foreigners in all reasonable languages. These Arabs are of the Desert tribe who own the Pyramids, and levy a toll (now limited by the Government) on all who enter or ascend the Pyramids. They toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon, when not in his best glory, must have been arrayed like one of these. A favoured few are employed by the Sheikh to assist foreigners in the arduous ascent up the Great Pyramid, and the almost sterner descent into its bowels; they are sure of their tips—the rest have to make a living as guides and vendors of antiquities. There is need of a guide to show you the innumerable antiquities by which the three great monuments are surrounded; but unless you are well-informed and resolute, he shows you nothing of the kind. He takes you straight to the Great Pyramid, and tries to make you buy tickets to ascend it and enter it; and then he takes you on to the Sphinx, and tries to make you buy a ticket to enter the very ancient, but uninteresting and unintelligible, temple

there. He does, it is true, converse with you most amiably about the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid—partly with a view to expanding his tip, partly because it is his nature to be amiable and affable, and because he feels that he is your host, entertaining you on his property. But he is profoundly lazy, and hardly takes you a yard off the bee-line from the tramway station to the Pyramid of Cheops and the Sphinx

It is no wonder that Cairo's only road is beloved of motorists and tandem-drivers, for it is, especially after it has struggled away from the outskirts of Gizeh, the village which gives its name to these Pyramids, a strikingly beautiful one; and even before this there are old trees and seductive gardens in the Khedivial suburb surrendered to a zoological garden and a college. The avenue, which shades the trams all the way out to the Pyramids, is nowhere finer than here, and the land speculator, who has beaten down palaces, has spared the trees, where he has not begun to put up his ridiculous German villas.

But when this suddenly ends, and the causeway-head is reached, your heart leaps within you: it is to be hoped that you will pay your first visit, as I did, while the autumn inundation turns the whole champaign into a lake, with the Pyramids on its farther shore.

The jumping-off place for the Pyramids is one of the most bustling spots in Egypt. The tram pulls up in the shadiest bit of its own avenue. Its arrival has been awaited by a small army of camel-boys, donkey-boys, guides, and all sorts of Arabs who come under neither of these categories. The camels make a splendid background, and the foreground is sketchy with tourists of all ages and conditions in special desert dress. Mr. Thackeray's caricatures hardly exaggerate their eccentricities, though most of them do not mean to wander a hundred yards from the down-trodden road between the Mena House and the Pyramids. The Mena House impresses you almost as much as the monuments themselves, when you emerge from the tram-station in the custody of some enterprising Arab, and begin to ride or walk up the steep, white, winding road which leads past the Pyramid of

Cheops to the Sphinx. The hotel covers a huge space ; its exterior is really Oriental, with its long, low, white façade, its flat roofs, its balconies, and its verandahs of dark *meshrebiya*. The road is too steep for a feeble motor to face.

The sign "Kodaks Developed" strikes your eye before the Pyramids themselves.

If you mean to walk, before you leave the tram-station hire an Arab for a shilling to be your guide for the afternoon. If you make the price beforehand, there are plenty of nice and charmingly dressed Arabs willing to take this modest remuneration. They don't depend upon it for a living ; they may be as well off in their way as you are, but it gives them a little pocket-money and pleasant society for the afternoon. If there are ladies in the party there are plenty of Arabs who would really do it for nothing—they like talking to ladies. They may be inspired with false hopes, for the flirtations of visiting ladies with Arabs form one of the ugliest chapters in the social history of Egypt.

At any rate, hire your Arab, and keep him in his place politely ; for Arabs value politeness. You may not intend to do anything for which you require the explanations of a guide, but when you have engaged one guide the others cease offering their services, which saves a great deal of conversation ; and if you don't wish to be photographed, or buy scarabs or little gods from the vendors who line the whole way like a guard of honour, he will do the refusing on your behalf. He can silence them with a sign (oh blessed sign ! ) ; for if he is not there to make it, just as the turn of the road throws the whole vastness of the Pyramids before you with the suddenness of a cinematograph, and your mind bows down in worship of one of the most glorious impressions the world has to give, a beast, selling sham antiquities, flings himself across your line of vision, and duns you to buy his impostures.

If you have a guide, he tells you when a good view is coming—he invites you, as it were, to strike a pose ; and the antiquity-sellers wait like jackals till the lion has finished.

The great Pyramid of Cheops, the world's premier monument, stands by the roadside without any kind of fence round

it. It does not require any: it is so steep that you cannot climb up to its top, or down into its interior, without Arabs to hold you up, if you are a person of comfortable figure. It is built of sandstone blocks bigger than yourself, which once were cased with a smooth slope of polished granite, sculptured and painted like the exquisite little granite sanctuary at Karnak. Cheops, who built it, was a king of the Fourth Dynasty, and lived about 3,700 years before the birth of Christ. His real name was Khufu; Cheops is a corruption like Leghorn. It is convenient for learning one's lessons in Egyptian antiquities, that the oldest monuments of any importance should begin in the suburbs of Cairo, and the next oldest be at the next place (Memphis), within an excursion from Cairo.

It is not my purpose in these pages to give a minute account of any Egyptian monument. That is the province of the antiquarian, not of the travel-book writer. I deal with them only from the spectacular, the romantic, the historical point of view, and the last only very lightly. Therefore I shall not discuss any theories as to the origin of the Pyramids, or their religious attributes, or their functions. I shall take it for granted that they were, as the most important antiquaries suggest, merely tombs; I shall even refrain from describing the ascent or the interior of the Great Pyramid. I shall be content to say that you have to take two-shilling tickets before you are allowed to ascend or explore. For the Government has recognised the Pyramids as the property of the local tribe.

If you have successfully resisted the efforts of your guide to make you enter or ascend the Pyramid—there is no harm in climbing up the few yards which conduct you to the entrance, and looking down the ash-shoot which leads to its interior, but you must have a sufficiently strong head to resist the blandishments of the Sheikh—you will come in a few minutes to the Sphinx. You do not see it till you are right on it, for the road is overhung with *mastabas*—low, elongated pyramids with their heads cut off.

All of a sudden, a turn in the road shows the monster in

a sort of bear-pit, a large basin in the sand, with tourists standing all round its top, throwing ejaculations to the Sphinx as they throw buns to bears.

I grew very fond of the Sphinx. I have seen it at sunrise and sunset, moonrise and full moon, in the grey of early morning, at the fiery pitch of noon, in the torpor of the early afternoon, and at tea-time—and I feel gratitude, but contempt for the business capacities of the managers of the Mena House in not giving afternoon tea on the sands round the Sphinx. There never was such a site for a tea-garden. There are people who would go out from Cairo six days a week during the season to take a six-piastre tea, while they watched the Sphinx give the cold shoulder to his comic visitors. The Egyptian Sphinx is a man, though the Sphinx of the Greek Thebes was a woman. It is odd that the various nations cannot agree about the sex of things like the sun and the Sphinx. The German gives his sun the feminine gender and his moon the masculine, while the English always write about the moon as a sentimental spinster when they are trying to write literature.

The great Sphinx at Gizeh seems to be of the same sex as a prison-matron. Its sex is lost in its pitiless, stony glare. Most people are agreed that its expression is repulsive; none dispute that the pose of its head is as majestic as anything in nature. Its body is rather insignificant, and was repaired by some Balbus, who was accustomed to building walls. For the parts which wore out in its six or eight thousand years of existence have been walled up without any reference to the form of animal which it was supposed to represent. Archæologists are agreed, I may here interpolate, that the Sphinx was made before the Creation, if we take the date of the Creation given in the introduction to our Bibles, which is not the astronomical date used for deciding the age of flint cutlery. But to return to the Sphinx, which, old as it is, still has some rouge left on its face, to show that it was painted like other Egyptian monuments; it is the most extraordinary piece of sculpture ever wrought by human hands.

I visited the Sphinx three times by moonlight, and found it suffering more from popularity than by day. For one thing, there was no sun to be afraid of, and round the Sphinx and the Pyramids is the best place near Cairo "to catch a sunstroke," as the Arabs put it; and for another, there is only one really convenient tram each way after dinner, and that only runs on moonlight nights, labelled with an asterisk, "Au Clair de la Lunè" on the tramway time-tables. Consequently there is a perfect rush to the Sphinx by this tram. All the wrong sort of people go, especially among the Americans and Germans.

When you get out of the tram, promising yourself a poet's ramble, under the luminous night-heaven of Egypt, to the vast form, looking so rough and black beneath the sky, you hear a nasal scream, "Donkey with a lady's saddle!" or "Sphinx!" And a musical Oriental voice chipping in, "I tell your fortune."

You wait till all the Americans are mounted on camels and donkeys and cantering off, and then you step out along the white road through the bright air, wondering, as you pass it, at the sharp edges and the glowing pink of the Great Pyramid at night. Then the road dips, yellow between the pink mounds and *mastabas*, and soon you see the back of the Sphinx's head looking like the White Queen's in *Alice in Wonderland*. But the first glimpse of the left-hand half of the monster's face is wonderful, especially the way that the ear stands out and listens. You look at its calm majesty, and tell yourself, "This is the peace of God"

Your reverie will be rudely interrupted; an Arab fiend will burn magnesium wire in front of the Sphinx, making it look as if it had its eyes shut, and then come round and plague people for *bakshish*. But the white-robed, black-mantled Arabs, looking like Dominican monks in the mysterious light, are not out of place, when they are quiet. They look as truly part of the worship as the monks in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva at Rome. The camels, too, would suggest that first night at Bethlehem, if it were not for the American intruders who were riding them. Americans



cannot hold their tongues; their vulgar babel breaks every train of thought. As we were musing over the Sphinx, with its throat gleaming white in the moonlight, and Orion's sword hanging over its head like the fabled sword of Damocles, we heard voices from assorted States "Going to get arf?" "Isn't that fine?" "That is *ellegant!*" "Now, then, one, two, three." "It's rather grand, you know." "That's off our chests, anyhow." "What is the matter with my camel?" "Is that your camel playing funny tricks?"

Arabs are always at their worst on these occasions, when Americans are there, for nobody else is likely to pay them for their silly games. While we were trying to take in the Sphinx's points, as they appeared in this beautiful light, an Arab climbed on to its glowing pink head, and screamed to show people that he was there. The way he clambered round to the bottom of the ear was astonishing. In spite of his long gown he almost flew up, and came down more astonishingly still, ending with a jump from about half the height of the Sphinx on to the soft sand. There must have been a hundred people round where we were standing: half of them were fortune-tellers. The Sphinx, with its wise, sad, inscrutable face, seemed to be taking in everything. I wonder if it was really beautiful before its nose was broken, and if Napoleon's soldiers really blew its nose off with artillery by his orders. I don't think it can be true, because they could not shoot straight enough in those days.

And the Americans who were trying to take it in honestly were quite as distracting as the others who were only trying to keep on their camels, or bargaining to have cheap fortunes told. "You know, May, somehow or other it is full of majesty, and it is gazing right over our heads into eternity." May was not listening properly to this profound remark, for she answered, "The biggest pyramid in the whole lot is here." "I'd rather see it by this light than by any other," said the first. "I'd like to see it by daylight too," said May. And then the first one said: "Look at Osiris's sword and belt hanging over its head like the sword of Damascus!"

Gradually the donkey-train of Americans rattled off, with

the camel-riders wagging after them. One camel-rider was saying to another, "I'm not fascinated by it at all ; it's too much broken away ; I don't know what you are making such a fuss about it for ; you know I always said . . . Oh, Ella !" the voice rose to a scream as it uttered these words, and I knew that the camel had succeeded in doing something. The Arab driver thought nothing of it, for he simply said "Oosh, oosh," which corresponds to the "whoa" of a 'bus driver. And then Ella was lost behind the *mastabas*

The English were not wholly free from guile, for after a charming laugh, quite the Horatian *risus ab angulo*, I heard a pretty voice confiding to a friend, just as it might at a Khedivial review or in church, "Mr. Frost said my dancing was the best ; young Piper is said to be the best dancer in Cairo." They, too, went away soon, explaining that they were going to try and catch the last tram but one, instead of the last, and get back to the hotel "in time to do something." They had paid sufficient tribute to the gods of Egypt. Then we were left alone with the Pyramid Arabs and the policeman.

The Arabs have the grace to recognise that we are people who really love their Sphinx and Pyramids, and are trying to take in the message of this calm evening and these immortal monuments. They have left off trying to tell our fortunes and sell us scarabs ; and if at rare intervals they speak, it is to point out some phenomenon of the genius of the place—the bark of a jackal or hyæna, the shadowy outline of a tomb. I have looked at the Sphinx long and earnestly ; I think it never could have been very beautiful, with that long upper lip, even when its nose was whole. But it is marvellously majestic and mysterious ; I have seen nothing like it since I said good-bye to the great Buddha at Kamakura in Japan ; and that had none of these glorious colours glowing like the dawn. It was not sitting in a golden moon-cup.

The more I look at the Sphinx the grander it grows ; it is so inscrutable, so strong. The Sphinx is the King of Egypt ; it is Rameses still among us and immortal ; it is a human

being which has seen all the history that is history from the very beginning. It seems as old as the beginning of the world. Dr. Budge says that Egypt had a certain civilisation fifteen thousand years ago, the depraved Egyptian made sham glass jewels six thousand years ago. What city, I wonder, was the Egyptian Brummagem?

At last everything has gone except two sand-carts, two squatting Arabs and a loving couple, so the blessed quiet, the peace of God is returning. This is the most marvellous night we have ever spent under the gemmed Egyptian sky. I like to hear the eternal barking of the dogs at the villages of the Pyramid Arabs by the still waters of the inundation: it fits in. It is wise to wander to the little hill above the Sphinx also, to see its long white figure and the white bones of its back, while the head looks as dark as a Nubian's in the clear, keen desert air. From this point you get all three pyramids in a line and the Sphinx crouching at their feet. Where the paws of the Sphinx were showing but a few months ago are two gaily caparisoned camels with their drivers, like black nine-pins, sitting beside them. The temple below the Sphinx looks curiously ghastly with its low walls staring up at the sky. It reminds me for some subtle reason of the exhumed, lava-crusted corpses in the museum of Pompeii. We shall not linger, long looking at it. Out at the Pyramids he who hesitates is not lost, but is found by an Arab looking for *bakshish*. From above, the black figures on the sand in front of the Sphinx look very weird. It is by moonlight that the Sphinx gets over its sunken position best; it is even an improvement.

The monster, the Ancient of Days, crouches like a lion in its sand-cup; it is always listening with its great ears—marvellously listening ears; but its wise lips are always sealed. To stand under the Sphinx at moonlight extinguishes even Abu Simbel; the Arabs, in their ghostly garments, are just the right touch. But by all the canons of poetical justice, the piastres, which you give them to hold their peace, ought to have turned into the little round flat stones, which are called the Sphinx's money, when they take them from their bosoms

in the morning, as the gold turned into withered leaves in Irving's Alhambra. The gods who punish for greed should decree this, for if you understand what Arabs are talking about, you will always find that it is money.

It is by moonlight that you best realise how enormous, how mighty is the head of the Sphinx—the most subtle piece of sculpture the world ever saw ; even the muscles of its throat tell their prodigious tale by night ; it is only by night that you see the anatomy of its bones. To feel the littleness of one's life in the presence of this millionaire of time, one has only to climb up and stand upon its lion-like flanks in the cold white light.

The moment we broke off our reverie with thoughts of the last tram, the Arabs began fortune-telling and scarab-selling again. As we were walking down and beating them off like flies, we caught sight of the Great Pyramid on the edge of the inundation, like Etna hanging over the Ionian Sea. But with this difference, that its double was reflected on the smooth water. Had the ancient Egyptians, I wonder, any expression which signified both the Ka, the personal double of the deceased man, and his reflection or shadow while he was alive?

The Ka, as it seemed to me, of the chief Pyramid on the water, fixed in me the resolve to come back with blankets, and pass the whole night in the magic company of the Pyramids and the Sphinx.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### Sleeping at the Feet of the Sphinx

OUR project of sleeping at the feet of the Sphinx was put off by the advice of more experienced friends, until just before we left Egypt. The air of the desert is so cold at night, in the winter and the early spring, though by day you are afraid of getting sunstroke till nearly tea-time. We chose by chance a night of special significance in the Near East—Good Friday night. Think what that would have meant if we had been sleeping in the desert outside Jerusalem, instead of the desert outside Cairo. As it was, we thought only of the picnic phase of it, besides our blankets and waterproof sheets for the desert dews. We had the wherewithal for tea, and something stronger than tea, and bread and Cross-and-Blackwelliana. For four persons the baskets and rugs came to quite a respectable camel-load.

The Berberine of an Arab-speaking surveyor friend, who helped us to carry out our project, conveyed our stores to the Mena end of the tramway, and loaded a camel with them to take them to whatever camping ground our madness might select. He disapproved of the whole thing. Berberines don't like being out at night; they are so unusually well off for ghosts. If he had had sufficient intelligence to realise that there was an Arab cemetery just over the rise from the Sphinx, he would probably have fled screaming back to Cairo—run all the way if he couldn't get a tram. But he did not find this out till the morning, when he climbed the rise to say his prayers in the first rays of the sun. He thought it very unconstitutional that we should not have a

tent, and had brought his master's two camping-out bedsteads with him as a protest. He was given them both to sleep on. We all wanted to try the vaunted softness of the desert sand, and the hardy surveyor was not going to sleep on a bedstead while there were ladies on the sand.

We proceeded at once to the Sphinx, where we found a hundred or two of moonlighting tourists (we had of course chosen a moonlight night), with the usual accompaniment of donkeys, camels, and pyramid-touts. Quite a number of families went back to America extremely dissatisfied. We had spoilt their night for them. Why hadn't they thought of taking their beds with them, and having this Sphinx-novelty to talk about when they returned to Indiana and Ohio?

We thought that baggage-camel might have saved us from the attacks of dragomans, but there was one who would not be shaken off. As we passed the Great Pyramid, he informed us that it was a pyramid.

"Who built that pyramid?" I asked.

"Cheops, sir."

"Who was Cheops?"

"I don't know, sir. He built it as a tomb."

"Was he a German?"

"An Englishman or a German, sir."

"Was he a Christian?"

"I think so, sir; but I'm not sure, because it was five thousand years ago."

The English of this obliging person was excellent, and when we came to the Sphinx he said:

"And that is the Sphinx. The greatest evil Napoleon ever did was letting his soldiers practise their Field-Artillery at the Sphinx."

The Berberine in charge of the luggage-camel looked the picture of disgust. I determined to take his photograph in the morning, and hoped that he would not be reconciled to his fate by that time; his droop was inimitable. The person most pleased was the policeman, who smelt *bakshish* in pretending to take care of us.

The desert was a lovely pink colour in the moonlight, as we gazed across it; the Sphinx towered in front of us from the pit at our feet; behind it we could see the dark rim of the world's most ancient temple, and the dark bluff overhanging the Arab cemetery. There were a few Arabs crossing it in the distance; they looked like black ghosts. Any one walking on the desert at night seems to be stealing across it. A star fell, very bright and large; the moon looked so bright and so near the earth that I almost expected to see it fall too. I should like to see the moon fall if it did not hurt the earth. Soon every one had left except three camels and three Arabs sitting in the sand beside them, down by the paws of the Sphinx, just where we wished to lay our beds.<sup>1</sup> Why did not they move? They looked as if they never would move, as if they were cut out of stone like the Sphinx. We forgave them, because they were so splendidly in keeping. As their fitness in the picture was borne in upon

<sup>1</sup> It was Thothmes IV. who first cleared away the sand, fifteen centuries before Christ. "Long before his father's death," says Breasted, "a hunting expedition once carried him to the desert near the Pyramids of Ghuzeh, where the Pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty had already slept over thirteen hundred years. He rested in the shadow of the Great Sphinx at noontime, and, falling asleep, the sun-god, with whom the Sphinx in his time was identified, appeared to him in a dream, beseeching him to clear his image from the sand, which already at that early day encumbered it, and at the same time promising him the kingdom. The prince made a vow to do as the great god desired. The god's promise was fulfilled, and the young king immediately upon his accession hastened to redeem his vow. He cleared the gigantic figure of the Sphinx, and recorded the whole incident on a stele in the vicinity. A later version, made by the priests of the palace, was engraved on a huge granite architrave taken from the neighbouring Osiris temple, and erected against the breast of the Sphinx, between the forelegs, where it still stands."

"The Sphinx," says Dr. Budge, "is hewn out of the living rock, but pieces of stone have been added where necessary. The body is about 150 feet long, the paws are 50 feet long, the head is 30 feet long, the face is 14 feet wide, and from the top of the head to the base of the monument the distance is about 70 feet. Originally there probably were ornaments on the head, the whole of which was covered with a limestone covering, and the face was coloured red. Of these decorations scarcely any traces now remain, though they were visible towards the end of the last century. . . . Egyptology has shown (1) that it was a colossal image of Ra-Harmarchis, and therefore of his human representative upon earth, the King of Egypt, who had it hewn; and (2) that it was in existence in the time of, and was probably repaired by, Cheops and Chephren, who lived about 3700 B.C."

us, we hoped that they would stay there all night and form part of our séance.

Then two fat Indians came along on very small donkeys, attended by two little boys in fluttering white night-shirts. The Indians and our Arab policeman conversed with each other in English. I could interpret a look of surprise, and certainly a look of utter boredom, on the face of the Sphinx to suit my frame of mind.

To get away from the Indians, who really were rather good adjuncts to the scenery, with their black faces and fancy dress, we left the Berberine, who was comforted by the presence of the policeman, to unload the camel while we took a walk into the desert. The old Arab cemetery struck exactly the right note in the moonlight, with its white-turbaned tombs, its dark sycamores, its two tall palms, and the four pink pyramids beyond. The little pyramid, too lowly to be noticed often, stood out well from here beside its lordly brothers which were built to entomb Cheops and Chephren and Mycerinus, who would none of them recognise their own names in this popular form. Cheops called himself Khufu, Chephren called himself Kha-f-Ra, and Mycerinus called himself Men-kau-ra.

We wandered on to the top of the bluff to see the dark-headed white Sphinx surrounded by all the pyramids and *mastabas*: the little tombs of the Arab cemetery were spread out like a map at our feet. Farther off were the lights of the two Pyramid villages: we could see the houses of the nearer—they were so white in the moonlight. Last time we passed that little graveyard in the dark everything seemed so very different, for some notable was being carried to his grave, followed by hundreds of torches, with a noise of wailing and chanting which could be heard half a mile off in the night stillness of the desert. Then the air had been as keen as frost, now there was a soft, sweet wind—the Zephyr of classical story.

I don't think I ever remember air so lovely as we lay under our blankets on the desert sand — with waterproof sheets between: the surveyor insisted on that. It was not the soft bed that the sand itself would have been. I have often



lain on those sands at sunset looking at the Sphinx. But we found quite enough dew on our blankets, when morning came, to be glad of his insistence.

After all, any kind of bed was good enough to have the privilege of lying in that air, under that gorgeous sky, looking at the majestic calm of the Sphinx's face between its two great ears hanging down with the grace of a Pharaoh's head-dress. Straight over it, from where I was, glowed Sirius the Dogstar, one of the brightest orbs in the firmament. And glorious shooting stars fell to earth behind it all night long.

A little after midnight a soft grey owl flew out, and sat on the Sphinx. An hour passed, and then it flew away between us and the moon, with a curious sheen on it. I am sure that all of us spun thoughts about it.

About this time our policeman got tired of his vigil, and sent a ghaffir or watchman, with whom he must have arranged some profit-sharing system, to take his place. The ghaffir, whose English was limited, came up, "Do you want some one to sleep *her*, sir?"

"Oh, yes," we said, reflecting that the Pyramid Arabs would have no love for the Berberine, and might do something disconcerting.

Towards morning the beautiful bright Sirius went home behind the hill; and grey clouds came up and hung a curtain over the face of the moon. I was rather glad, for if the moon had still been shining brightly, the effect of the first rays of the Egyptian sunrise striking the Sphinx would have been robbed of some of their magical splendour.

We all, except the Berberine, woke with the first grey of dawn, and made tea out of a basket on which the name of Harrod's was rather conspicuous, and freshened our rolls with pâté de foie gras and other tinned delicacies. Egypt is the land of little tinned goods. Even at hotels like the Cataract at Assuan you always have your jam out of Cross and Blackwell's tins. That after-dawn tea occupied the best part of an hour, because, as we sat round and munched, we watched the gorgeous lights which came from the hills beyond the Nile, calling forth all sorts of new expressions

on the weather-beaten visage of the Sphinx. It was hard to realise that the face upon which the sunrise was playing was the image of a sun-god—"the Ra-Harmachis of a forgotten people," as Maspero called it. But it was a fine sensation, worth all the discomfort of sleeping in one's clothes on a mackintosh sheet on the ground, to have one's waking eyes open on the towering figure of the Sphinx, with the Great Pyramid behind it. The Sphinx, with streaks of sunrise on its grim face, looked like a different image from that which I had seen, when my eyes closed, gilded by the moonlight, with the dark blue heaven behind it coruscating with constellations; and now there was a chill in the air. The ghaffir was of course saying his prayers, prostrating himself before the puce light coming up over the eastern hills behind us. It brought a characteristic thought to the tip of Magda's tongue, as she took away the tea-basket from the Berberine, who was looking as stiff as the servants in the pictures on the tomb of Thi. She said: "A man likes to see a woman domesticated, he likes to see her say her prayers and make the tea." The Berberine found a lovely new use for the tea-basket. Long after the tea was made we found him warming his hands over the spirit-lamp.

Soon after 5.30 the sky-blue came out, and at six the Sphinx changed to gold, and then the Pyramids, which had been looking quite black, changed to gold. We turned to see where the gold was founting from, and saw only the high mosque on the Citadel looming through the mist, as if it were but a mile away. Soon all the Pyramid Hill was bathed in gold. I was able to take good photographs, with the Sphinx facing us full, though it was so early, while the Berberine was loading up the camel. Before we got away to the tram, all the camels, police, and villagers of the two villages seemed to have collected round us. All the ghaffirs said they had been guarding us all night: it was such a novelty for people to be sleeping out at the Sphinx without tents.

Our return journey on the tram in the early morning was full of charming effects; the camels advancing through the

## Sleeping at the Feet of the Sphinx 331

bearded corn looked like scarabs ; the Pyramids we had left behind us gleamed orange in the palm groves ; the duck-herd was driving his waddlers down to the river ; the tall, slim water-girl was holding her skirts high as she filled her pitcher from the canal ; the low morning sunshine was on the face of the waters ; the procession of Egypt had started on its daily march to Cairo

## CHAPTER XXXII

### Memphis, the Ancient Capital ; The Tombs and Pyramids of Sakkara

**I**T is at Memphis, and its more visible satellite Sakkara, that you begin to see museum things. From Memphis to the gates of the Sudan, Egypt is an open-air museum, where temples and tombs are arranged like shop windows for public inspection.

There are a few stray Egyptological specimens in the foundations and *mastabas* round the Pyramids. There are a stone with something on it, and an impaired obelisk at Heliopolis, but nothing else near Cairo till you get to Memphis and Abusir.

Nor do first impressions of Memphis divulge much. There are, it is true, two splendid and colossal images of Rameses the Great, the first you have seen in situ. But if you have been wise enough to explore the Cairo museum before you begin to explore the desert, you will have seen statues of Rameses the Great ad nauseam. If photographs had been invented in his day, he would have been the photographer's best friend. And the fact that these two Colossi of Memphis lie where they were found is not impressive, because they look as if they were waiting for Carter, Paterson & Co to send for them, being obviously out of their proper environment, though the site of the principal temple of Ptah, the head of the Trinity of Memphis, is hiding somewhere in the vicinity—playing hide-and-seek with Mr. Flinders Petrie. The first of the two Colossi is the best off. Its setting is delightful. Say that Thomas Cook & Son have taken

you in a comfortable steamer to Bedrashen, and provided you with a stimulating donkey, you will arrive at Colossus No 1 in an appreciative mood. For it is a delightful excursion. You land and mount a little below Bedrashen, and scamper under the palm-trees to that sinful and picturesque village perched on the edge of the flood.

This may be your first introduction to Egyptian rural life, with its ancleted women going down to the river to fill their kerosine tins, or beat the family washing; and its men riding asses or camels to eternity without any hope of getting there.

The Egyptian *fellah* is a good worker—he will toil from dawn to dusk in the blazing sun, throwing up water out of the Nile, or earth out of an excavation: he is a natural agricultural labourer—but he always seems most in his element when his legs are hanging down from a stirrupless donkey, or crossed on a camel's neck. On the donkey he is going to his business; on the camel he is a mere incident—an accompaniment to a load of earth, or a stack of green forage. Whatever he is riding, if he is only a baby perched upon a buffalo, he does it with so much dignity and nonchalance that he looks as if he was part of a procession. Egypt is a succession of processions, in which white-robed sheikhs with their heads veiled like brides, on little white donkeys, are the central figures, and animals—least of all the horse—play the principal parts.

Engaged in that procession are all sorts and conditions of riding asses, some of them very ill-conditioned, saddled with a bit of sackcloth, and bridled with a bit of rope. The office of beast of burden the ass shares with the camel—he is more agreeable about it, but accomplishes less; in haulage the buffalo comes to their relief. But there is not much wheel traffic in Egypt, where roads worthy of the name seldom wander far outside a city's gates. The Egyptian rides or walks—always as if he never meant to get to his destination. Having a flock of sheep or goats with him is no perceptible drag on his movements, and makes him appear in a more amiable light, for he is generally carrying the weakest lamb or kid in his arms after the traditional manner of the Good

Shepherd. The powerful, unwieldy, and unreasonable buffalo is, for some occult reason, usually in charge of a little child, who has a taut string over his shoulder to lead the great beast, or rides him barebacked without so much as a halter. The woman seldom rides; she is a beast of burden like the camel and the donkey, and has her duties to perform; she will have something on her head—a few gallons of water, or her kitchen utensils and some turkeys.

This is the procession of Egypt, and it may always be seen coming down to the landing at Bedrashen, where the very houses are beasts of burden, with sheaves of green sugar-cane leaning against their walls and battlements of dung on their roofs.

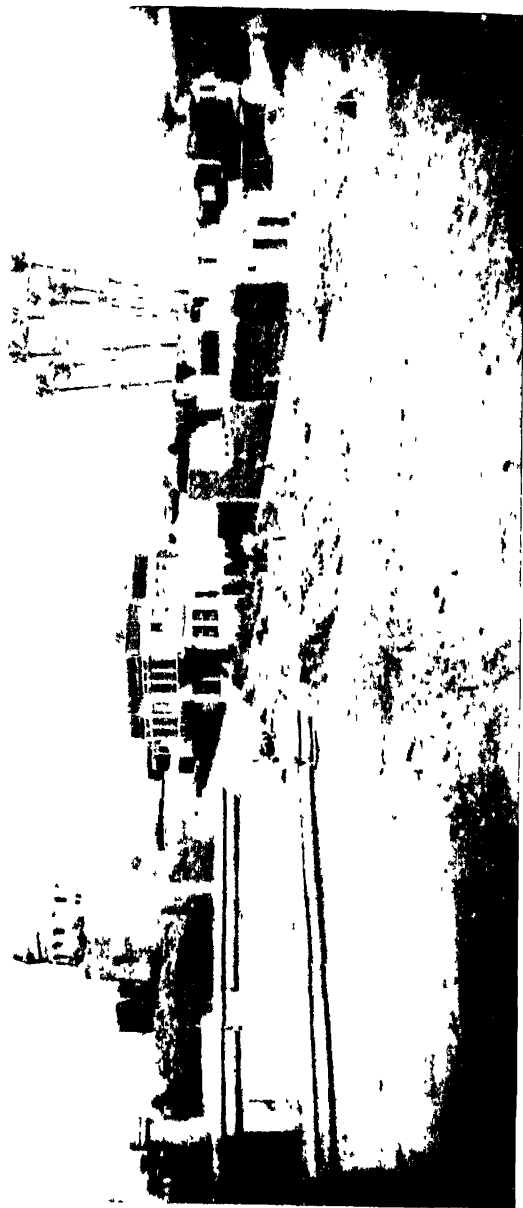
If it be true that the Nile flood is gradually going to be lost to sight in irrigation, instead of being spread out in fairy, palm-bordered lakes, I am thankful that I did the ride from Bedrashen to Memphis in the days of untutored inundation. It was one of the most delightful rides I ever took, albeit it was on a donkey hired for a shilling or so by Thomas Cook & Son. We rode on soft sand or velvety vegetation, through groves of palm-trees with vistas of lakes, till we came to a little hill, where, under the finest palms of all, lay the prostrate Rameses. "Please to notice her darling wife, Nefer-tari," said Mohammed the dragoman, pointing to a diminutive figure clinging like a caterpillar to the leg of the great image.

This image, made of red granite, and a still larger one, made of white limestone (which has a shed over it, and a ladder to climb up its prostrate form), were discovered and disinterred from the mud by British officers.

There is a delightful Arab village and cemetery on the top of ancient Memphis, where I would gladly have lingered and taken kodaks; but I refrained, since I knew that I had hardly begun my sight-seeing, and for another hour rode along a high causeway between the lakes of the inundation, looking across the water at the lebbeks and sycamores which shaded the summer wells, and, when we drew clear of the trees, at the ancient Step-Pyramid of Sakkara, on the desert bluff above the waters.



THE TOMBS OF THE MAMLUKS,  
Showing the poorer and richer types of altar-tombs



THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT MEMPHIS A VILLAGE AND ITS CEMETERY



Memphis having been built of mud some thousands of years ago, and having been annually inundated by the Nile for a good part of the time, has, except in its higher portions, made itself the subject of a new proverb: "Mud thou art, to mud thou shalt return." But, as you approach the Sakkara Pyramids, its site is above flood-level; and here you find mud-brick buildings which would not have survived one English June, much less five thousand years. These mud bricks look more like peats than anything else: you could use peats for building in Egypt if the fire-insurance companies, which are mostly Scotch, did not object.

When the last bit of inundation is passed, and you clamber up to the plateau on which the Sakkara Pyramids stand, you see a splendid stretch of desert—more imposing than the desert at Ghizeh because it is more open—more interesting, except for the Sphinx and the classical Pyramids which adorn Ghizeh. For of Ghizeh the city we know little, but we know that underneath this desert are square miles of buildings which formed part of the world's first great capital, the Memphis of Menes.

The Step-Pyramid, the oldest of all the Pyramids, looks bowed with age, while the two great Pyramids of Ghizeh are types of immortality in their immutable outlines.

That plateau of Sakkara hides in its bosom secrets marvellous even for Egypt, the land of marvels—the catacombs of the Apis bulls, the mortuary chamber of the Pyramid of Unas, the tombs of the Persians, the *mastabas* of Thi and Mereruka, the Memphite avenue of sphinxes.

The great avenue of sphinxes, discovered with such sound audacity by Mariette, is said to be seventy feet under the sand again.

The Chapel of the dead Pharaoh in the Pyramid of Unas remains in its original perfection and beauty. One of the long shoots by which you enter pyramids—passages almost too steep for you to keep your footing, conducts you into the mortuary chambers, whose high-pitched roofs are painted like a starry sky, and whose walls are panelled with alabaster engraved with the oldest religious writing in all old Egypt.

Behind the Pyramid are three tombs of the Persian Dynasty; one of them belonged to Darius's doctor. Its only means of access (and it was the easiest of the three) was by a perpendicular shaft eighty feet deep, which is now occupied by a circular iron staircase. Tunnels have been cut through to the other two tombs, so that you can take quite a long walk in the bowels of the earth, looking at charming bas-reliefs and bright little paintings, horribly modern for Egypt, only 500 B.C.

The tombs of Sakkara are not unworthy of mention beside even the tombs of the Kings at Thebes. They are almost on the surface, and are not so extensive as those cathedrals of the rocks; but their decoration is hardly excelled anywhere. Being the truncated rectangular pyramids, called *mastabas*, they were formerly above ground, built, not excavated. And they are so near the surface now that they are lighted by rows of skylights, which look like asparagus frames in the desert. They consist of a number of chambers decorated with paintings of marvellous freshness, and some of the most beautiful bas-reliefs in the world. They belong to the first great period of Egyptian sculpture. The tomb of Thi, and the tomb of Ptah-hetep, the best of them, belong to the fifth dynasty, the tomb of Mereruka and the tomb of Kagemna to the sixth. In other words, they are all well over five thousand years old. While they were perfect it was almost impossible to locate the mummy-pit—the grave which the mausoleum was built to adorn. Egyptians were so afraid of their remains being disturbed, that they resorted to all sorts of artifices to hide the actual site of sepulture, which was at the bottom of a deep shaft. I am not going either to describe at length or to explain the wonderful decorations of these tombs.<sup>1</sup> The symbolism was elaborate. It was meant to supply all the wants of the

<sup>1</sup> I have an additional reason for treating Memphis sketchily, because the whole face of it is likely to be changed by Professor Flinders Petrie's explorations. Already he has done much to rescue from oblivion the great Temple of Ptah, which was to Memphis as the Temple of Amon-Ra was to Karnak. And during the last year or two he has discovered under the encroaching sand one of the great stone palaces which are among the rarest of Egyptian monuments.

dead man's double. If food was painted on the walls he did not feel hunger; if the conciliation of deities was attended to in the same way he suffered no inconvenience at their hands.

As the dead Egyptian wished to enjoy the same luxuries and pleasures that he possessed in life, the whole life of the wealthy of that day is depicted on their tombs. Their flocks and their herds, the artisan's and craftsman's work of their slaves, their hunting, their banqueting, their sacrificing, are all carved in exquisite low-relief, or depicted in bright colours, on the walls of the tombs of Thi and Mereruka and Ptah-Hetep. They even have make-believe doors in the steles for the use of the double.

The tomb of Mereruka has a special feature of its own: the life-sized figure of the occupant standing at the head of steps as if he was about to descend into the tomb—a most wonderful and life-like piece of sculpture. From it, and the pieces like it in the Cairo Museum, one knows the Egyptians as they were before the days of Joseph and Moses—mild-eyed, soft-featured, light-coloured. The statues are realistic; the bas-reliefs, on the other hand, are so conventionalised that they tell us nothing of the type, though they are eloquent of the life.

These tombs are brilliantly lit with sunlight, and have no trace of damp or malodour. They are entered like an Etruscan tomb—down a staircase or ramp laid bare when the earth which concealed their entrance was removed. They are very bright and cheerful. The only thing against them is that they look like imitations of themselves. Some of the reproductions of Etruscan tombs in the Vatican look quite as real.

The *pièce de résistance* at Sakkara is the celebrated catacomb of the Apis bulls. Its extent, like its antiquity, is immense. Its galleries are more than a thousand feet long. The oldest of the tombs date back to the time of Rameses the Great. I have seldom been in so eerie a place. We were taken down into the bowels of the earth, and found ourselves in a vast subterranean gallery in some places fifty

feet high. There were no lights but the tapers we bore in our hands. At short intervals, right and left, abysses opened up, into which we should have fallen but for the stout wooden rail which guarded them. Each of these was tenanted by a vast sarcophagus of polished Assuan granite, black with age, from which the enormous lid had been dislocated by some incomprehensible force, and the contents withdrawn. It is said that the early Christians opened them to destroy the mummies of the sacred bulls. To any one else they would have been valuable curios if nothing more. At all events, not one of them is there to astonish the world with its gigantic chrysalis

Near the end of the portion which we were permitted to see, the abysses grew shallower, and steps were laid down to one of them, to admit of the examination of the sarcophagus, which could be entered by a ladder. The only interesting thing about it was the enormous thickness of the sarcophagus—about a foot. But dismantled as the catacomb is, it is one of the most impressive sights in Egypt, for everything about it—its galleries, its mummy pits, its sarcophagi—are on so vast a scale, and it has the darkness of Hades.

When a Cook's party visits Sakkara, the piece of desert which contains all these monuments is a picture. The unsaddled asses lie about the golden sand in every posture of asinine content. Here you see the donkey at his club munching green forage, where his master has been persuasive enough to get his tourist to pay for some. The donkey-boys cover their heads and go to sleep in the sand, looking like so many corpses. And the Europeans, who are not chasing round the monuments, sit about the verandahs of Mariette's bungalow, eating their lunch, or trying to get rid of the Arab touts who are besieging them with little gods and mummy-beads.

The second time we went to Sakkara we did not return to Bedrashen. We made a bargain with our donkey-boys to take us across the desert to the Pyramids of Ghizeh, where we could catch a tram to take us back to Cairo. The ride across the desert was delightful. It took us past the lake and Pyramids of Abusir; and all the time, as our donkeys lazily

pattered across the soft sand, our eyes rested first on the mighty Pyramids of Cheops and Chephren, and then on the Citadel of Cairo crowned with the dome and minarets of Mohammed Ali's mosque.

Night falls swiftly in Egypt. It was broad daylight, it was sunshine, while from the opposite slope we tried to locate the Sphinx, which is singularly difficult to see until you come right on to it. Before we were on to it the night had fallen and the stars were out.

As neither we nor the donkey-boys knew our way in the dark, we nearly missed the last tram. But I could not feel very anxious about it, we had happened upon a magnificent Arab funeral making its way to that poetic cemetery on the plain behind the Sphinx. The mourners were many, and held their flambeaux aloft, while they chanted the lion-like qualities of the deceased. It was a wonderful sight to see that high-horned coffin in the centre of hundreds of white-robed figures, making their way in the torch-glare along the edge of the cup in the desert where the Sphinx lies—the monument of the Great Enigma.

To few of the visitors, who crowd to the monuments of Sakkara, does the history or the meaning or any of the mystery signify. It is the marvel of size, the conquest of impossibility, the humour and the decorative effect of the sculptures and paintings which attract their attention. They recognise that the Mausoleum of the Bulls is one of the wonders of the world; they observe with a smile, not devoid of satisfaction, that high officials in the Egypt of the Pharaohs were as fond of sport as high officials in the India of King Edward. Thi's large game were hippopotami, playing like dogs till the harpooner was upon them. Thi did his shooting of waterfowl with a boomerang like an Australian black fellow: the boomerangs in the museum at Cairo would be hardly distinguishable from the boomerangs in use on the Murray and the Murrumbidgee. Thi was a man of great estate, and the whole business of a great estate is painted and sculptured on the walls of his tomb, to occupy his double. Two things above all arrest the attention of the visitor—little

human touches like the above and the immortality of everything on earth in Egypt.

Its dry desert sand is an elixir, which preserves for ever the pigments in the pictures and the mummified remains of the human body. The one thing it could not do was to save the soul alive, and therefore the Egyptian imagined a disembodied double who lived for ever the life of the deceased, in surroundings spiritualised from their counterfeit presentment, while the soul, which had been the life, was transported to the Judgment Hall of Osiris.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### Heliopolis

THE sun of Heliopolis has for ever set. The antiquary has forgotten to search for the secrets it holds in its bosom. Its ruins are but nitrates to enrich the crops which wave above them.

Yet Heliopolis told more upon the world than any city of Egypt. Heliopolis was the seat of learning, the University of Egypt, till the Ptolemies transferred its sages to their new capital, Alexandria. Pythagoras and Plato studied there, as Moses, according to tradition, did before them. The fame of the city must have been great even in Joseph's day, for it was the daughter of Potipherah, the High Priest of On, whom the Pharaoh gave as a wife to Joseph in the height of his favour.

But Heliopolis died young—young for Egypt, since it was in ruins when Strabo visited it in the reign of Augustus.

A single obelisk pointing to the sun is all that remains of the city—one of the pair called Pharaoh's Needles, erected in front of his temple by Usersten the First, the busy Pharaoh whose tomb is one of the glories of the Cairo Museum—the other is said to lie beside it, buried many feet below the earth—in the company doubtless of many, for the Sun-City was full of obelisks, solar emblems.

Herodotus visited Heliopolis, and had a good deal to say about it, as had the Arab geographers of the Middle Ages. But the visits of Pythagoras and Plato to Heliopolis pale before those of the Phoenix, the purple bird which is the emblem of the immortality of the soul.

Regularly every five hundred years a new Phoenix arrived

at Heliopolis carrying the ashes of his father from Arabia—just as the remains of the Holy Carpet are brought back from Arabia now. The father Phoenix, when he felt that his time had come, retired to Arabia and cremated himself—the new Phoenix sprang from the ashes, which he transferred to Heliopolis so religiously. The mother was never mentioned. The Egyptians called the Phoenix Bennu, and consecrated it to Osiris. The pagans took it as an emblem of the traveller returning from strange and distant lands after long separation. The Christians made it the symbol of the consolatory hope that all which dies, fades, or is extinguished in Nature shall revive to new life, bloom, and glory. Herodotus has much to say about the Phoenix, which, he admits, he had never seen except in a picture. He says that “if he was like his picture he was partly golden-coloured and partly red, and in outline and size was very like an eagle.” I, too, have seen his picture in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and, with due deference to Herodotus, I think he looks much more like a stork with a dash of cormorant or pelican. He concludes with the following naïve remark :

“They say that he has the following contrivance, which in my opinion is not credible. They say that he comes from Arabia, and brings the body of his father to the Temple of the Sun, having enclosed him in myrrh, and there buries him in the temple. He brings him in this manner: first, he moulds an egg of myrrh as large as he is able to carry; then he tries to carry it, and, when he has made the experiment, he hollows out the egg and puts his parent into it, and stops up with some more myrrh the hole through which he has introduced the body; so when his father is put inside the weight is the same as before. Then, having covered it over, he carries him to the Temple of the Sun in Egypt. This they say is done by this bird.”

The Phoenix was so popular that it was symbolical of many things, from the soul to the inundation of the Nile; and there were people who thought it only came to Heliopolis every seven thousand years, which goes to prove that Heliopolis must have been a very ancient city.



It is badly in need of a Phoenix now to teach it how to rise from its ashes. For it consists of an obelisk and a stone with something on it, though there are banks all round it, which must have been walls if they do not contain walls now—a point which it is not easy to decide in the case of a mud wall.

They make the most of what they have at Heliopolis. There is the spring, for instance, of clear, pretty water under a tall lebbek-tree, not so very far from the obelisk. This is hailed as the Fountain of the Sun. The name is also applied to the Virgin's Spring, half a mile nearer Matariya Station both of which need the assistance of a *sakiya*.

My first view of Heliopolis presented one of the most poetical pictures I saw in Egypt. We were walking along the broad, white road which leads from Matariya Station, and my attention was taken up with a Madonna-like woman, a *bedawin*, I suppose, because she was unveiled, carrying a baby in the traditional position—on her left arm. She was young and comely, and equally taken up with her child and the importance of having a door-key. The key was a stick about a foot long, with a few nails stuck into the end of it—a very fashionable style of key in rural Egypt. I kodaked, first, the *tout ensemble*, and then the key.

When I looked up from my task I saw before me a vast wheat-field, surrounded by banks whose crisp outlines betokened that they had been the walls of the Heliopolis of the Pharaohs. Away on the left, behind the mud parapet, the tall sails of *gyassas*, like the wings of great brown birds, were gliding up and down the Nile. In the centre of the young green, pointing in mute protest to the sky, was the last bit of Heliopolis—King Usertsen's obelisk. Away on the right, in the shade below the lebbek, a pair of humped oxen, blind-folded, were driving the *sakiya* which pumped up the clear waters of the Fountain of the Sun. The sound of the *sakiya* seemed to fill the whole area on which had stood the University City of Moses and Pythagoras and Plato—an open square like the courtyard of El-Azhar under the waving carpet of the wheat. The day may come when El-Azhar is

under the soil, with only the drone of the *sakiya* to recall her ten thousand voices between her broken walls.

But perhaps Heliopolis is not dead—it has never been seriously excavated. Beneath its depths of rich alluvial soil there may be vast remains, if it was built of stone; for Heliopolis was not destroyed, it was only abandoned, to enhance Alexandria.

We bade a lingering good-bye to the palm- and tamarisk-crowned rampart of Heliopolis, and turned our steps to Matariya with our eyes on the citadel and its fantastic mosque. To Roman Catholics Matariya is one of the most sacred spots in Egypt, for the Virgin's Tree and Spring are here marked by the little chapel with the eloquent inscription, "Sanctae Familiae in Ægypto exsul."

The last heir of the often-renewed Virgin's Tree is slowly dying. It lies prone on the ground, but its top is still green. It is covered with the names of the pious and the irreverent, who arrived at the same result for different reasons. It was once presented, like the Ghizira Palace Hotel, to the Empress of the French by the Khedive; but it has drifted somehow into the possession of a very practical Copt, who has put a railing round it and invites the Faithful to carve their names on that, and even provides a knife for the purpose—with some idea of *bakshish*, no doubt.

Judging by the appearance of the *sakiya*, the Virgin's Spring has long gone out of use. It had a pretty legend, very ancient, of a threefold miracle. When the fugitives reached Matariya, the spring, like all the wells on the site of Heliopolis, had brackish water. The young mother bathed the hot and weary child in it, and instantly the waters became sweet and fresh. Then she washed its clothes in it, as mothers so often take the clothes off a child, and wash them while it plays about, in the Nile villages of to-day. When she wrung out the clothes, wherever the drops fell on the earth balsam trees sprang up. Soon they heard their pursuers; but in one of the balsams a hollow revealed itself, into which they crept, and a spider spun an iridescent web over the aperture, which made their enemies pass it by. Not

so long ago Matariya was still famous for its balsam shrubs, with the oil of which every Catholic of Egypt was anointed at baptism. That is the legend; but there are disturbing facts, the worst of which is that a Pharaonic myth, quoted by Ebers, tells us of a god who was saved from his pursuers by hiding in a tree, and also of balsam shrubs that sprang from the moisture with which a celestial being bedewed the earth. And a conflicting account says that Cleopatra, who, we know from Josephus, had balsam farms in Judæa, introduced them here. As for the Tree of the Virgin, it is known to have been planted in 1672; its predecessor having died in 1656 or 1665.

Strabo saw the great temple of Heliopolis, and has left us an account of it. There is a curious legend attached to one of its statues. When the great Caliph, Ibn-Tulun, visited Heliopolis, he was shown an idol, and informed that if any one in possession of any office ventured to look upon it he was shortly afterwards deprived of his place. The autocratic Sultan ordered it to be destroyed, but he died less than a year afterwards.

The present village of Matariya consists of the sort of villas to which tradesmen hope to retire. No one looking at them would dream that within a few yards of them the glories of Heliopolis had come and gone, and a Biblical legend had taken immortal root, and a great battle had been fought. It was right on the site of these villas that Kleber won his famous victory over the Turks in 1800. The little towns along the little railway from Pont Limun to Marg have the reputation of being cheap to live in for Cairo, so new cottages are going up all the time, which give them a cheap aspect. But Marg, two or three miles on, and Kanka and the Birket-el-Hadj have a fine crusted Mohammedan flavour. The Birket-el-Hadj is the rendezvous of the Mecca caravan. I might almost say, *was*, for the Mecca pilgrims are showing an increasing inclination to make use of railway facilities. But in the good old days it was the last halt before the caravan came into Cairo, and the citizens used to swarm out to meet it.

I bitterly regret not having seen Kanka, which was once a city famous "for its fine buildings, its mosques, and its colleges," and which still has one of the finest examples of mediæval Mohammedan art.

Marg came nearer my preconceived idea of an oasis than anything I saw in Egypt, with its palm groves and pools of water on the edge of the desert. It is a typical Nile village, as yet secure from the searching feet of change. We were warned against its inhabitants, who were accused of having committed the crime which stands next to murder in the British Criminal Code, against two English ladies not so long ago. But we found them a polite, unspoiled people.

We found Marg a sweet little place, with a front of tumble-down cafés and tiny shops full of Manchester cottons, almost hidden in vegetation, along the edge of a backwater spanned by spidery bridges. There was a tangled background of palms, bananas, and tamarisks round a mosque with a mad minaret. The mosque had a palm-tree growing right up through it. The town, perhaps because of its vicinity to the Birket-el-Hadj, was full of pilgrims' houses decorated with extraordinary pictures of the journey to Mecca, and contained one quite fine mosque with loopholed walls, a court in the style of Pompeii, and an old fountain under a fantastic roof supported on four columns. It had an odd little minaret like a lighthouse. This mosque was delightful—the ideal of a country mosque, inside.

I doubt if there is as pretty a village in this part of Egypt. The oasis effect is ever before you, with a backwater winding through the palm-trees. The houses have architectural ambitions like the houses of Nubia, and the people are so clean and quiet. One thing struck me very much. We came upon a house, with a lovely old tabernacle erected against it: the colours were rich and harmonious, and a fine carpet was spread underneath it, on which many old men were sitting. In the middle, from a dikka, a sheikh was intoning the Koran, and at the edge a blind man was putting his foot into all the shoes till he knew the feel of his own. We looked

at the polite native, who was conducting us round the village, though he knew not a word of English, for an explanation. "Morto," he said, perhaps his only word of Italian; and we knew that they were not celebrating a wedding, or the return of a pilgrim, but paying the last tribute of respect to the dead.

We wandered through the narrow, palm-shaded streets, winding in many places between high, blind Nubian walls. The doors and windows of the houses had often moulded arch heads. We passed here a coppersmith, there a barber plying his trade, or a basket-maker showing the use of the palm-leaf stacks piled against the houses. There were many dear little boys and girls about, but they were flyey-nosed and flyey-eyed. We were looking for a saint's tomb—a popular postcard subject at Cairo—and at last we found it, thanks to a sketch of it which Norma Lorimer made, like Archimedes, with the point of her parasol in the sand. It was charmingly picturesque. The curved stretch of water in front of it had taken the colours of the sunset, and by the water's edge were elegant desert women in thin black veils close-drawn, and men, resting from their day's work, in blue galabeahs, faded to the colour of the pale Egyptian sky, with a background of palms that reminded me of the orange-grove in Botticelli's *Primavera*. Here and there were clusters of prickly pears, or a child drinking the viscous green water out of a grimy pan. It looked horribly enterical, but it takes more than that to upset the stomach of an Egyptian child.

Marg was like a dream to me. The palms and the water and the sunset, and the veiled, black-robed figures, so perfect in their grace, and the little mediæval town, seemed to have no place in actuality.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### Helwân, the Week-end Resort of Cairo

**H**ELWÂN is an overrated place except as a spa. Doctors seem to think well of its baths—perhaps because they are the only baths a patient, whose business will not allow him to leave Egypt, can be sent to. They are certainly very up-to-date. Otherwise, whatever you get at Helwân you can get better elsewhere. It has a racecourse; but you get better racing at Ghezira; it has golf, but you get better golf at Ghezira, both in Cairo, less than half an hour's drive from your hotel; it has wonderful views of the Pyramid Field, but hardly more wonderful than the view from the roof garden of the Hôtel Semiramis, in the best quarter of Cairo. And as a desert resort it is inferior to the Mena House—which is on the edge of a better bit of the desert for riding, on account of the innumerable antiquities within a day's ride, and is right out in the country, whereas Helwân is a town of the type I hate, consisting of new letting-villas and lodging-houses, arranged in rectangular blocks with hotels on the outskirts. It all looks horribly new; the houses have taken on the colours of the desert: the population has taken on the manners of a picnicking place; few of the gardens have yet grown; little is left unspoiled except the waters, which have attracted the rheumatic in all ages.

I am speaking, of course, of the new Helwân inland. The old Helwân, on the banks of the Nile, is a mere Arab village, which no one would think of, did it not possess a picturesque lunch- and tea-pavilion called the Villa San Giovanni, which overhangs the river like a Japanese tea-house.

New Helwân has, however, a very charming hotel, the Al-Hayat, run on rather new lines, and constructed, regardless of cost, by a grateful Russian baron, whose son was cured here.

Sunset over the Pyramid Field is one of the great assets of Helwân, and the Al-Hayat is built, to take full advantage of this, on the highest point of the town. It has charming terraces to capture the view, and gardens to escape the wind—always a thing to be reckoned with in the desert. They are still in the making, and therefore improve almost month by month.

The hotel is built in rather a quaint, if not intelligible Oriental fashion, and about the most pleasantly furnished of any hotel I have been in. Its rooms are like luxurious rooms in a private house. There are plenty of baths, but the installation of hot water left something to be desired when we were there: and the height of the hotel is very fatiguing, because the lift does not take you all the way up; and you are always losing the way to your bedroom, because there are so many different staircases and passages.

To make up for this it is easy to get away from people, if you want to be alone to read or write, and the restaurant is admirable. The food seemed to me more *recherché*, the menu more varied and original than in most Egyptian hotels. You felt as if you were dining in a first-class London club.

The Tewfikieh Palace, another of the hotels, was a palace of the Khedive Tewfik, and has therefore a charming Oriental air about it. But its position down on the flat by the race-course and golf-links seemed to me much inferior to that of Al-Hayat for any one except a golfer, since no place, not even Helwân, races every day. For golfers, of course, it is very charming to be able to step right out of your hotel on to the links, especially such sporting and novel links as those of Helwân.

The other large hotel, the Grand Hotel, is run by the George Nungovitch Company, and claims to be the first-class hotel of Helwân. But I cannot see that it has any advantage over Al-Hayat, except that you are with the crowd of the

wealthy, and therefore have Cairo Tourist High Society over again—if that is to be coveted.

The same company runs the Hôtel des Bains, close to the new Royal Baths, which are very up-to-date.

What Helwân needed to make it compete with the other "bedrooms and lungs" of Cairo, when I was there in 1907, was an express train to traverse its fourteen and a half miles of railway track in twenty minutes if not a quarter of an hour—it generally took one about an hour to get there. And there ought certainly to be a road, whatever it cost to make or keep up, from Helwân to Cairo. It would be full of motors all the afternoon in the season. Helwân is the kind of place a motorist would like to go to, because there are no roads to anywhere else except the Pyramids and Heliopolis, and he would want an occasional change. It is just the sort of place to which people who did not want to see anything would go for lunch or afternoon tea.

But I am bound to say that Irene Osgood, who took her horses out there from England, has written most eloquently about its attractions, and the many objects of interest which she found in its neighbourhood : she is the prophet of Helwân, and knows a hundred times as much as I do about it.



## APPENDIX I

### Ways of getting to Egypt, Cost, etc.

FOR those who desire merely to get to Cairo and spend all their Egyptian visit in the capital, those, in fact, to whom this book is addressed, the P. and O. Company offer three different ways of performing the voyage. The passenger can either go direct from London to Port Said by sea, which occupies eleven days; or go overland from London to Marseilles and thence by sea to Port Said, which occupies five days; or overland from London to Brindisi, and thence by sea by the P. and O. to Port Said, which takes about a hundred hours. The passenger by the all-sea route has stoppages at Gibraltar and Marseilles. A first-class single from London to Port Said by the all-sea route costs £17 to £19, and second class £11 to £13, according to the boat. The fare from Marseilles to Port Said is £12 to £13 first class and £8 to £9 second class. The fare from Brindisi to Port Said is £9, and the fare from London to Port Said via Brindisi, including rail and sleeping-car, is £22 10s. 2d. But all these prices are subject to the 10 per cent surtax consequent on the increased price of coal and ship supplies. The passenger can start by any of those routes once a week. The all-sea boats leave Tilbury on Friday, the Marseilles boats leave on Friday also.

But there is also a combined service arranged between the P. and O. and Thomas Cook & Son which gives the visitor to Egypt a forty-four-days tour from London to Assuan and back for forty-five guineas; and a thirty-days tour, via Marseilles and Port Said from London, to Assuan and back

for the same price. In either case the passenger goes by rail from Port Said to Cairo and Luxor and by Nile Express steamer from Luxor to Assuan

By either route the passenger gets six days' hotel accommodation at Cairo at the Bristol, the new Khedivial, Eden Palace, or some similar hotel, three days' hotel accommodation at Assuan, at the Grand Hotel, and four days' at Luxor at the Hotel Luxor; also transfer with baggage between the hotel and the station, and the hotel and the steamer pier at Cairo. The railway tickets and the steamer tickets on the Mediterranean and Nile steamers are included. Passengers are strongly recommended to pay an extra two guineas and go first class by rail in Egypt, where the natives overcrowd the second class. For an extra five shillings a day you can have superior accommodation in Cairo at the National Hotel, but the two first-named have a far more interesting position. If the passenger wishes to travel first class instead of second, including the superior hotel accommodation in Cairo, he has to pay £61 14s. for the all-sea route and £60 6s. for the Marseilles route.

A good many people who go to Cairo intending to spend a whole winter there, when they meet friends who have been up the Nile on one of Cook's Nile trips feel that it is absurd to leave Egypt without going to see the magnificent monuments of the Pharaohs. Cook's Nile steamer season lasts, roughly, from the beginning of November to the end of March, and there are four different services comprised in it, which enable visitors to see all the most famous monuments of the Pharaohs, many of which are in situations which have no town, in which a foreigner could stay, anywhere near them.

The great service is the three-weeks voyage on the Nile in the three largest steamers, the *Egypt*, the *Rameses the Great*, and the *Rameses*, which go the whole way from Cairo to Assuan by the Nile and give you three days and a half at Luxor and two days and a half at Assuan, besides giving the passengers visits to all the great monuments of ancient Egypt between Cairo and Assuan. That starts every Tues-

day and costs £50. In connection with this may be taken the third service of one week's voyage from Assuan (Philæ) to Wady Halfa and back, giving one a day and a half at Halfa. This costs £20, and goes twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays.

On the way up passengers are taken to visit all the principal monuments of ancient Egypt between the First and Second Cataracts. They need not come back by the same steamer that takes them to Halfa but can go and spend whatever time they require at Khartûm, taking the desert railway from Halfa to Khartûm. The three-weeks voyage from Cairo to Assuan is running practically all November, December, January, February, and March. The steamers between the First and Second Cataracts run from the beginning of December to the middle of March.

There is another service of tourists' steamers between Assyut and Assuan. These run from the beginning of January to the middle of March and give practically the same facilities as the principal service, except that you go from Cairo to Assyut by train, and have rather less time at Luxor. Passengers on the way back have, on certain boats, the option of going down the Nile instead of by train from Assyut to Cairo. This service costs £20, and includes three days' accommodation at Luxor and four at Assuan.

The fourth service is one of express steamers from Cairo to Assuan and back, taking nineteen days and costing £22, which includes four days in Assuan at the Grand Hotel and three days in Luxor at the Luxor Hotel. Or, for £18 10s. the passenger can go to Luxor and back and have three days in the Luxor Hotel there.

Tickets, which allow the passenger to enter all the monuments, have to be taken in Cairo beforehand and cost 120 piastres, rather under 25s. These particulars are necessarily given very briefly and baldly. These Nile tours deserve to be far more widely known than they are. Cook's Nile steamers are more comfortable than any hotel in Egypt, and the monuments you see on the voyages are the most wonderful in the world.

## APPENDIX II

### Cairo was the Real Scene of the "Arabian Nights"

LANE, in his translation of the *Arabian Nights* (at the end of Vol. III in the Standard Library Edition, published by Chatto & Windus), wrote : " Another question may here be considered, before I attempt to show in how great a degree the *Thousand and One Nights* consists of Arab tales. With respect to the country in which it was composed, I have before stated my opinion that it was Egypt, and I still hold that opinion. All the complete copies (printed and manuscript) of which I have any knowledge describe Cairo far more minutely and accurately than any other place ; and the language, manners, customs, etc. which they exhibit agree most closely with those of Egypt. This is also evidently the case with Galland's very imperfect MS., which existed A.D. 1548 ; and we have no reason to refer the date of any other copy to so early a period. Here, moreover, I may adduce, as confirming my own views, the opinion of Von Hammer, who thus writes : ' Si, donc, on ne saurait déterminer que d'une manière vague la date de la rédaction arabe des Mille et Une Nuits, on peut indiquer avec bien plus de précision l'Egypte comme la patrie de cette édition augmentée et retouchée, car les mœurs, les usages, les circonstances locales, la langue, tout, en un mot, d'un bout à l'autre de l'ouvrage porte l'empreinte de ce pays.'<sup>1</sup> The frequent mention of Haroon Er-Rasheed might seem to render probable the idea that the tales in which he figures were composed by a native of Baghdād, and a subject

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by De Sacy, in his Dissertation prefixed to a late edition of Galland's version of the *Thousand and One Nights*.

of the Abbásees. But the fame of the Kaleefeh, as stated in one of my notes, has occasioned a proverb still current in Egypt; and I see nothing unreasonable in the opinion that a late Egyptian writer of tales should have made him the performer of extraordinary actions, and his celebrated capital the scene of wonders and magnificence Von Hammer, speaking of the tales which he regards as the most recent, and of purely Egyptian origin, says, 'La scène de ces contes est placée ordinairement au temps du khalife Haroun-al-Raschid.'

"It is not easy to point out all the stories in the *Thousand and One Nights* which are Arab compositions; but, as I have before observed, that such stories constitute the chief portion of the work, I believe all critics have admitted. According to Von Hammer, as De Sacy states, 'the groundwork of the *Thousand and One Nights* if found to have become, by the addition of tales of Arab origin, the least portion of the collection, old Persian or Indian tales have also been introduced, but the materials of later dates and of purely Arab origin form incomparably the greater portion. If so, the chief part of the 1000 Nights must have been excluded from the 1001; and the latter is far more an Arab than a Persian composition. I do not, however, consider all the tales of Arab composition as of purely Arab origin. All the stories of which the scenes are laid in Persia or India may be more or less founded on tales formerly current in those countries; but I think that there are few of these which are not Arab compositions.'

"In my endeavours to ascertain the period and the country in which this work was composed, I have not merely considered its internal evidences of the time and place. The earliest period at which any portion of it has been incontestably proved to have existed is the year 955 of the Flight (A.D. 1548). This date appears in a marginal note written by a Christian reader of Tripoli in Syria, expressing a prayer for the long life of the owner of the book (li-málikihî), in a volume of the incomplete MS. which Galland procured from Syria; and in another volume of the same is a similar

note by the same person, dated 973. We do not find that Eastern authors have made any unmistakable mention of this work as now known to us. They may have been silent respecting it, because it is not written in the usual literary style, and because to them it wants the strange charms which so powerfully recommend it to the natives of the West, and which have led such eminent scholars as De Sacy and Von Hammer to discuss its literary history. I regret that the opinions of these two celebrated Orientalists on this subject disagree; but as I am placed in the unpleasant predicament of being obliged to differ from one of them, I am glad that I have been led to accord with the former in some points, and in others with the latter. Respecting the date of the work, my opinion nearly coincides with that of De Sacy; he concluded that it existed about the middle of the ninth century of the Flight, because he did not find coffee mentioned in it; but on the same ground he might have assigned to it a somewhat later date, as the custom of drinking coffee did not become common even in Yemen until the latter part of that century, and coffee was first imported into Egypt within the first ten years of the next century; some years more elapsed before it began to be a common beverage there; and thence it passed, probably through Syria, to Constantinople."

### Kahira the Guarded

Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole, in his standard work *Cairo* (Virtue), wrote:

"When Edward Lane sailed from England for Egypt in the summer of 1825, two months elapsed before he came in sight of a 'tall distant sail,' which proved to be the well-known Pillar of Pompeius the Prefect at Alexandria. Two generations have passed since then, and a visit to Egypt is now an ordinary Christmas holiday. People go to Cairo as they used to go to take the waters at Bath or Tunbridge, and the cataracts at Aswan are almost as familiar as Sandford Lasher. Nor is it any wonder that Egypt every year draws larger crowds of visitors to the banks of her broad river. No

country has more to offer to the wearied Londoner ; nowhere is life more restful than on the bosom of the Nile, among the palms and temples of Luxor, or in Philæ's enchanted isle. The whole atmosphere breathes tranquil contentment. It is not merely the quest of the sun that takes us to Egypt ; the total change of scene, of ideas, of manners, attracts us. We are glad to shake off our stereotyped habits and conventions or at least to see how others can do without them ; and this it is, as much as its picturesque confusion and its romantic associations, which lends Cairo its imperishable charm

" For Cairo is still to a great degree the city of the *Arabian Nights*. We can still shut our eyes to the hotels and restaurants, the dusty grass-plots and villas of the European quarter, and turn away to wander in the labyrinth of narrow lanes which intersect the old parts of the city, just as they did in the days of the Mamlûk Sultans. And as we thread the winding alleys, where this streak of sky marks the narrow space between the lattice-windows of the overhanging stories, and dive under a camel here, or retreat into a narrow recess there, to escape destruction under the feet of the apparently impassable crowd of beasts of burden, we may fancy ourselves in the gateway of Aly of Cairo, and in that stall round the corner we may perhaps find the immortal Barber Brothers ; within the grated lattice over the way, the three Royal Mendicants may at this moment be entertaining the Portress and her fair sisters with the history of their calamities ; and if we wait till night we may see the good Harûn Er-Rashîd (newly arrived from Baghdâd) stealthily pursuing his midnight rambles, with Ja'far at his heels, and black Mesûrzz clearing the way. That old man sitting in his cupboard of a shop may be able to exchange 'new lamps for old,' in the manner of Aladdin's Moorish sorcerer. A few streets away from the European quarter, it is easy to dream that we are acting a part in the veracious histories of the *Thousand and One Nights*—which do, in fact, describe Cairo and its people as they were in the fourteenth century. In its very dilapidation the city helps the illusion. Its ruined houses, which no one thinks of repairing, are full of the superstitious sentiment

of the East; naturally they are haunted by Efrits and other mischievous Jinn, who frighten away God-fearing tenants. Its mediæval monuments transport one to the golden age of Arabian art and culture. Among its mosques and the fragments of its palaces are the noblest examples of Saracenic architecture that can be seen in all the wide empire of Islam. Damascus and Baghdâd, Delhi and Gaur, Seville and Cordova, possess elements of beauty that Cairo has not, and serve to complete the history of Arabian art; but to see that art in its perfection, uncorrupted by the mechanical detail of the Alhambra, free from the distorted outlines of India, we must study the mosque and tombs of Cairo—the beautiful city extolled throughout the Arabian literature, insomuch that the Jewish physician, in the story of the Humpback, protests that 'he who hath not seen Cairo hath not seen the world. Her soil is gold; her Nile is a marvel; her women are as the damsels of paradise, her houses are palaces; and her air is soft, sweet-smelling as aloes-wood, refreshing the heart—and how can Cairo be otherwise, when she is the Mother of the World?'

"The historian of the Mamlûks is fond of telling how the Sultan made his progresses, held reviews of his troops, led a charge in battle, or joined in the games at home. The Mamlûks were ardent votaries of sport and athletic exercises. En-Nâsir was devoted to the chase, and imported numbers of sunkurs, sakers, falcons, hawks, and other birds of prey, and would present valuable feofs to his falconers, who rode beside him, hawk on wrist. Beybars was a keen archer, and a skilful hand at making arrows. He erected an archery-ground outside the Gate of Victory at Cairo, and here he would stay from noon till sunset, encouraging the Amîrs in their practice. The pursuit of archery became the chief occupation of the lords of his Court. But Beybars, like most of the Mamlûks, was catholic in his tastes; he was fond of racing horses; spent two days in the week at polo; was famous for his management of the lance in the tournaments which formed one of the amusements of the day; and was so good a swimmer that he once swam across



the Nile in his cuirass, dragging after him several great nobles seated on carpets.

"Such outward details of the life of the Mamlûks may be gathered in El-Makrizy; but if we seek to know something of the domestic life of the period, we must go elsewhere. We find indeed occasionally in the historian an account of the revels of the Court on great festivals, and he tells us how during some festivities in Beybars' reign there was a concert every night in the Citadel, where a torch was gently waved to and fro to keep the time. But to understand the home-life of the Mamlûks, we must turn to the *Thousand and One Nights*, where, whatever the origin and scene of the stories, the manners and customs are drawn from the society which the narrators saw about them in Cairo in the days of the Mamlûks. From the doings of the characters in that immortal story-book we may form a nearly accurate idea of how the Mamlûks amused themselves; and the various articles of luxury that have come down to us, the goblets, incense-burners, bowls, and dishes of fine inlaid silver and gold, go to confirm the fidelity of the picture. The wonderful thing about this old Mohammedan society is that it was what it was in spite of Islam. With all their prayers and fasts and irritating ritual, the Muslims of the Middle Ages contrived to amuse themselves. Even in their religion they found opportunities for enjoyment. They made the most of the festivals of the Faith, and put on their best clothes; they made up parties—to visit the tombs, indeed—but to visit them right merrily on the backs of their asses; they let their servants go out and amuse themselves, too, in the gaily illuminated streets, hung with silk and satin, and filled with dancers, jugglers, and revellers, fantastic figures, the Oriental Punch, and the Chinese Shadows; or they went to witness the thrilling and horrifying performances of the dervishes. There was excitement to be derived from the very creed; for did they not believe in those wonderful creatures the Jinn, who dwelt in the mountains of Kaf, near the mysterious Sea of Darkness, where Khidr drank of the Fountain of Life? And who could tell when he might

come across one of these awful beings, incarnate in the form of a jackal or serpent, or meet, in his own hideous shape, the appalling Nesnâs, who is a man split in two, with half a head, half a body, one arm and one leg, and yet hops along with astonishing agility, and is said, when caught, to have been found very sweet-eating by the people of Hadramaut? To live among such fancies must have given a relish to life, even when one knew that one's destiny was inscribed in the sutures of the skull, and in spite of those ascetic souls who found consolation in staring at a blank wall until they saw the name of Allah blazing on it."

## APPENDIX III

### Artists' Bits in Cairo, with Directions how to find them

*(Artists may be grateful to me for indicating the streets in which they will find the best subjects in the Old Oriental parts of Cairo.)*

FROM the big square called the Place Bab-el-Khalk which stands next to the Governorat of Cairo and opposite the Arab Museum, there runs down to the Bab-es-Zuweyla a little winding street called the Sharia Taht-er-Reba'a. It is a very typical native street, chiefly devoted to wood-turners, who use a bow-string instead of a bench and lathe and seem to spend most of their time in turning the little pegs of hard wood used in the manufacture of *meshrebiya* work. You will pass more than one quaint old fountain with a Koran-school buzzing in the arcade above, and more than one small mosque as you go down the street. But it is not until you are almost opposite the back wall of the great El-Moayyad mosque that you come to the little Place-el-Gulchani, where there are generally tentmakers working at the preposterous embroideries to which they give so much more attention than the actual manufacture of marquees. At first it looks a very ordinary little square, having for its principal feature a plain flight of mosque steps leading up to rather a dead wall. But at the top of the steps there is an open passage, and, if you happen to look through that, you see something as shining and blue as a huge turquoise. You fly up the steps and through the passage, and there in the centre of a courtyard see a little sort of tower covered with glorious ancient tiles of the richest turquoise blue. This is the *tekke* of the Dervishes who take for their patron the well-

known saint El-Gulchani. And that turquoise-blue tower is a small mosque, which has under its painted dome a beautiful old brown *meshrebiya*-work cage with a painted canopy roof like a Turkish fountain, and many Moslem prayers hanging on it. The mosque is, I regret to say, painted with imitations of those blue tiles inside, and the cells and *dikkas* under the verandah of the colonnade are very ordinary. They are still, I believe, in the occupation of the Dervishes, though Dervishes are no longer allowed to perform their religious exercises for the amusement of the tourists in Cairo. The mosque has beautiful glass mosque-lamps—in the old style, if they are not old—and fine soft carpets. But the richly painted tomb of the Dervish saint El-Gulchani in the adjoining chamber is decorated with vases which might have come from the Brompton Road.

This is one of the mosques which are being so happily restored by the Wakfs. The court will soon be very picturesque again. The antique green windows in the dome are pleasing, and the tiles on the tower-like façade of the mosque are incomparably the finest tiles *in situ* in all Cairo. Their blues are exquisite; their patterns are exquisite: the portal arch is a graceful trefoil, and the tall white dome above fits charmingly into the picture. This is called the Little Blue Mosque, and it is much bluer than the Blue Mosque itself. And there is a point on its steps from which you can see the whole of that exquisite blue façade through the cool passage.

It is a bit for artists to conjure with, though so few of them ever see it. And just round the corner is the charmingly picturesque entrance of the Cobblers' Bazar, gaily curtained, the best entrance for a painter in all the bazars.

Another artists' bit which most people miss is the street running from the Boulevard Clot Bey at the railway-station end down to the Sharia el-Marguchi, which is a continuation of the Brass Market, the Sûk or Sharia en-Nahassin. Like most other Cairo streets, it changes its name at short intervals. At the beginning it is called the Sharia Bab-el-Bahr, then it becomes the Sûk el-Khasher, then the Sûk es-Zalat, then the Sharia Emir-el-Giyûchi. At the commencement it is merely

picturesque on account of its narrowness and its overhangings and its windings; but when you get down to the Bab-el-Sharia Police Station, you come across a glorious old Arab house with a superb courtyard and rows of *meshrebiya* oriels outside. A little lower down there is a lovely fifteenth-century mosque with ancient Roman cippolino columns. It is called the mosque El-Ahmah, and has a sort of Pompeian peristyle. The gaily coloured door at No. 31 Sharia Emir-el-Giyûchi-el-Guani—for that is the full name of that now quite humble street—is a native hotel affected by the Arish people, which signifies the *Bedawins* of the Eastern Desert. At No 17 is one of the two *hammams* which I have described as being the best I know in Cairo. It too has very gay colours and *meshrebiya*-work outside. My notice was first attracted to it by them. No. 20 is a mosque with rather a taking, ancient-looking exterior, but though it has some antique columns inside it is not worth taking trouble to get into it, and is generally closed. No. 12, Sharia el-Shana—a name which seems to designate another portion of that street, though it is not marked on the map—has some of the finest *meshrebiya* oriels in Cairo. They are very large and very lovely. No. 33 has a very rich Moresco doorway. No. 19 is rich and fantastic and ancient outside, but not so good inside.

There is an eating-shop here with tiles of just the Sicilian patterns, and a Mohammedan prayer and a picture of the Virgin Mary next to each other so as to suit all classes of customers.

I fear that before this is printed the fine old Mameluke mansion which stood in the angle between the Sharia Emir-el-Giyûchi and the Sharia el-Barrani on the left-hand side, just at the bottom of the former, will have been completely torn down. For months and months it stood with the beautiful façade of its courtyard nearly all torn away, showing the most glorious woodwork inside. There was a sort of hall on the ground floor, a little back from the porch, which had a coffered wooden ceiling richer than anything to compare with it in Cairo, and beautifully panelled walls.

And there were other splendid decorations in this house. If it has been torn down, turn round the other corner of the Sharia el-Giyûchi into the Sharia el-Marguchi and take the first turn to the right. The Sharia Birgwan in which you find yourself winds round and round till it takes you to the mosque of Abu-Bekr Mazhar el-Ansari, one of the least known and most beautiful mosques in Cairo, a gem of the Kait Bey epoch, with ancient and interesting houses all round it. This mosque is especially rich in delicately carved ivories, which are employed on the doors at the foot of the pulpit staircase and other parts of the pulpit. The painted ceilings are delicious. None are more unspoiled. There is no other ivory-work in Cairo to be compared with its ivories except at the old Coptic church called the Mo'Allaka out at Old Cairo. Its *dikka*, or reading-desk, is like a charming fifteenth-century music gallery, with beautiful matrix decorations on its supports. Its pavement and walls are panelled with porphyry and *verde antico* in the Sicilian style, and it has two *liwâns* divided off by three elegant stilted arches, and an exquisite ceiling round its central cupola. It has been restored, but not too much, so that it is left in possession of all its mellow beauty of four hundred years.

Guides always protest that no such mosque exists, but if you follow my direction exactly you will find yourself opposite its doors. It is marked on Baedeker's map, which may be taken as a proof of its existence.

Artists will find this district one of the very best in Cairo for painting or photographing.

Other bits which the artist will find abounding in material are:

(1) The street running off the Sharia Mohammed-Ali, just before you come to Sultan Hassan's Mosque, which is called successively the Sharia el-Hilmiya and the Sharia es-Siyufiya, terminating in the Sharia Chikhun, which must be included because it contains the two Chikhun mosques.

(2) The street running out of the Sharia Mohammed-Ali

opposite the Hilmiya, called successively the Sharia es-Serugiya, the Sharia el-Magharbilin, and the Sharia Kasabet-Radowan, which ends in the Tentmakers' Bazar and the Bab-es-Zuweyla.

(3) The succession of streets between the Bab-es-Zuweyla and the Bab-el-Futuh, called successively the Sukkariya, the Sharia el-Akkadin, the Sharia el-Ghuriya, the Sharia el-Ashrafiya (here the Musky is crossed), the Sharia el-Khordagiya, the Sharia el-Gohargiya, the Sûk en-Nahassin, the Sharia el-Marguchi, the Sharia el-Barrani, the Sharia Bab-el-Futuh. All the bazars lie on or off these streets.

(4) The Gamaliya and its side-streets, including the hill of the Beit-el-Kadi.

(5) The long winding street leading from the Bab-es-Zuweyla to the Citadel.

(6) The street at the back of the Merdani Mosque, and the street leading from the Merdani Mosque to the Sharia Mohammed-Ali, called successively the Sharia es-Merdani and the Sharia Sûk es-Sellaha (Armourers' Sûk).

(7) The chain of mosques leading from Sultan Hassan's mosque at the end of the Sharia Mohammed-Ali up to the main gate of the Citadel, the Bab-el-Gedid.

(8) The streets round the great mosque of Ibn Tulun

To these must be added (9) Old Cairo, including Babylon, and (10) Bulak, which has some unimproved streets and old mosques.

Most of these streets the visitor sees in passing from one part to another of the Arab town, but he might well miss No. 1, because he would not pass down the Hilmiya except for the purpose of seeing its monuments—which include the El-Mase Mosque, one of the most exquisitely picturesque in Cairo; two beautiful old Dervish *tekke*, the magnificent fountain at the end of the Siyufiya, erected by the present dynasty; and the principal Chikhun Mosque, which contains the best Dervish *tekke*, and is on the whole the most paintable mosque in Cairo.

No. 2, leading from the Sharia Mohammed-Ali to the Bab-es-Zuweyla, he will often pass through, because it is the most

picturesque route to the bazars and the least crowded. The monuments on it are all obvious, except the fine Beit-el-Khalil, an old Arab mansion in a lane to the left just before you reach the Tentmakers' Bazar.

No. 3, the main avenue through the bazars, is too frequently passed to need any description. In the Sûk en-Nahassin it contains the finest mass of Saracenic architecture to be found in Cairo, or perhaps anywhere. There are an infinite number of beautiful and interesting bits for the artist all round the bazars. There is a very important group for him round the great mosque of El Azhar.

No. 4, the Gamaliya, is good for the magnificent porches and *meshrebiya* oriels, as well as mosques and fountains, at the end nearest the bazars. At the other end there are the two great gates of Saladin and a splendid piece of his wall. Opposite the mosque of Sultan Beybars is the lane leading to the palace of Sultan Beybars, the finest of all the old Arab palaces of Cairo which visitors are readily permitted to see. The name of the street is the Darb-el-Asfar, and the Palace stands at the end on the right-hand side. The Beit-el-Kadi, which has a picturesque old gateway just beside it, is the only palace in Cairo which has a five-arched *mak'ad*. The Gamaliya has the further advantage of being full of native life.

No. 5, the street from the Bab-es-Zuweyla to the Citadel, is full of the noblest monuments. Three artists' bits which one might miss are the beautiful wooden *loggia* behind the Kismas-el-Ishaky Mosque; the Arab Palace, only separated by a wooden gallery from the Sha'ban Mosque, which has at the top of its harem a magnificent but ruinous hall with the finest *kamariya* windows in Cairo; and the exquisite but not very noticeable fountain of Mohammed Katkhoda, and the Koran-school above it, just where the Sharia Darb-el-Ahmah changes its name to the Sharia el-Tabbana.

No. 6 requires more explanation. Right at the back of the Merdani Mosque is a fine but much-ruined Arab mansion, which might mislead any one looking for the celebrated and very perfect Arab mansion round the corner in the Haret



el-Merdani, which may be recognised because it has the Khedivial Emblem painted in a lozenge on its door—if the door happens to be shut, which it seldom is. Have no hesitation in knocking: the inhabitants do not resent the presence of strangers; they like turning an honest penny out of them, by taking them up into the *mak'ad*, which is the most beautiful and perfect in Cairo, with arches soaring almost up to the roof, and with two charming little pavilions of *meshrebiya*-work for the ladies of the harem. The whole façade of this courtyard has fine architectural decorations, and there is an intensely comic Hadji procession painted on it. As you proceed down the Sharia el-Merdani and the Armourers' Sûk there are several fine old Arab mansions, into two of which at least on the left-hand side you can make your way, while the famous baths of the Emir Beshtak are on the right-hand side. There are many other little bits that will gratify the artist, for the Arabs in this part of the city are very conservative in their habits.

The mosques in No. 7 are all quite obvious.

At the back of No. 8 the great mosque of Ibn Tulun as you go to the mosque of Kait Bey, which is by some considered the most beautiful in Cairo, you pass under one of the most magnificent ranges of *meshrebiya'd* oriel windows to be found in Cairo. There is one very beautiful Koran-school near the great mosque, and this is one of the best parts of Cairo for small ancient houses. Finally the artist must always remember that there is hardly anything more picturesque in the world than the best of the Tombs of the Caliphs and the Tombs of the Mamelukes.

## APPENDIX IV

### Mr. Roosevelt's Speech on Egypt at the Guildhall

SINCE I published my last book on Egypt Mr. Roosevelt has delivered his great speech at the Guildhall, and has thereby provoked a great deal of comment. The anti-patriotic people and papers to whom the prestige of Great Britain is anathema, and who spend their time in trying to prove that their country is in the wrong in every question that arises between it and any other country, hastened to denounce the speech as an affront and an outrage. This of itself would prove the justice and necessity of what Mr. Roosevelt said, if it were not notorious that he is one of the truest and most enthusiastic friends of the British Empire. As a matter of fact, every word of it was true, and he conferred the greatest possible service on this country by proclaiming from the housetops, in tones that no one could affect to ignore, the peril to which England has obstinately been blinding herself ever since Lord Cromer left Egypt. After Mr. Roosevelt had drawn attention to the peril in the Guildhall, even a McKenna could not pretend that he had heard nothing of it. Every Briton should be grateful to Mr. Roosevelt for risking ill-will to do our country such a benefit. At the same time I should be the last to deny that, if Mr. Chamberlain had made a similar speech in America upon the Colonial shortcomings of the United States, the American-Irish and a section of the American Press might have raised a storm which it would have been impossible to control. I was in America at the time of the Sackville incident. Lord Sackville gave that unhappy reply to a trap-question with

a great deal less deliberation than Mr. Roosevelt made his Guildhall speech. One can only urge in mitigation that the British are less sensitive about foreign interference, and that Mr. Roosevelt had previously secured the approval of the responsible Minister—Sir Edward Grey. The text of his speech, which was delivered on May 31 at the Guildhall, ran as follows :

"It is a peculiar pleasure to me to be here, and yet I cannot but appreciate, as we all do, the sadness of the fact that I came here just at the death of the Sovereign who was so mourned and whose death caused such an outburst of sympathy for you throughout the civilised world.

"One of the things I shall never forget is the attitude of the great mass of people, who in silence, in perfect order, with uncovered heads, saw the body of the dead King pass to its last resting-place. I had the high honour of being deputed to act as the American representative at the funeral, by my presence to express the deep and universal feeling of sympathy felt by the entire American people for the British people in its hour of sadness and of trial.

"I need hardly say how profoundly I feel the high honour that you confer upon me, an honour great in itself, and great because of the ancient historic associations connected with it, with the ceremonies incidental to conferring it, and with the place in which it is conferred.

"I shall not try to make you any extended address of mere thanks, still less of mere eulogy. I prefer to speak, and I know you would prefer to have me speak, on matters of real concern to you, as to which I happen at this moment to possess some first-hand knowledge ; for recently I traversed certain portions of the British Empire under conditions which made me intimately cognisant of their circumstances and needs. I have just spent nearly a year in Africa. While there I saw four British Protectorates. I grew heartily to respect the men whom I there met ; settlers and military and civil officials ; and it seems to me that the best service I can render them and you is very briefly to tell you how I was impressed by some of the things that I saw.

"Your men in Africa are doing a great work for your Empire, and they are also doing a great work for civilisation. This fact, and my sympathy for and belief in them, are my reasons for speaking. The people at home, whether in Europe or in America, who live softly, often fail fully to realise what is being done for them by the men who are actually engaged in the pioneer work of civilisation abroad. Of course, in any mass of men there are sure to be some who are weak or unworthy, and even those who are good are sure to make occasional mistakes; and that is as true of pioneers as of other men. Nevertheless, the great fact in world history during the last century has been the spread of civilisation over the world's waste spaces; the work is still going on; and the soldiers, the settlers, and the civic officials who are actually doing it are, as a whole, entitled to the heartiest respect and the fullest support from their brothers who remain at home.

"At the outset, there is one point upon which I wish to insist with all possible emphasis. The civilised nations who are conquering for civilisation savage lands should work together in a spirit of hearty mutual good-will. Ill-will between such nations is bad enough anywhere, but it is peculiarly harmful and contemptible when those actuated by it are engaged in the same task, a task of such far-reaching importance to the future of humanity—the task of subduing the savagery of wild man and wild nature and of bringing abreast of our civilisation those lands where there is an older civilisation which has somehow gone crooked.

"Mankind as a whole has benefited by the noteworthy success that has attended the French occupation of Algiers and Tunis, just as mankind as a whole has benefited by what England has done in India; and each nation should be glad of the other nations' achievements. In the same way it is of interest to all civilised men that a similar success shall attend alike the Englishman and the German as they work in East Africa; exactly as it has been a benefit to every one that America took possession of the Philippines. Those of you who know Lord Cromer's excellent book in

which he compares modern and ancient imperialism need no word from me to prove that the dominion of modern civilised nations over the dark spaces of the earth has been fraught with widespread good for mankind ; and my plea is that the civilised nations engaged in doing this work shall treat one another with respect and friendship, and shall hold it as discreditable to permit envy and jealousy, backbiting and antagonism, among themselves.

" I visited four different British Protectorates or Possessions in Africa—namely, East Africa, Uganda, the Sudan, and Egypt. About the first three I have nothing to say to you save what is pleasant as well as true ; about the last I wish to say a few words because they are true, without regard to whether or not they are pleasant.

" In the highlands of East Africa you have a land which can be made a true white man's country. While there I met many settlers on intimate terms, and I felt for them a peculiar sympathy because they so strikingly reminded me of the men of our own western frontier in America—of the pioneer farmers and ranchmen who built up the States of the great plains and the Rocky Mountains. It is of high importance to encourage these settlers in every way, remembering that the prime need is not for capitalists to exploit the land, but for settlers who shall make their permanent homes therein. No alien race should be permitted to come into competition with them. Fortunately, you have now in the Governor of East Africa, Sir Percy Girouard, a man admirably fitted to deal wisely and firmly with the many problems before him ; he is on the ground and knows the needs of the country, and is zealously devoted to its interests ; all that is necessary is to follow his lead and to give him cordial support and backing.

" In Uganda the problem is totally different. Uganda cannot be made a white man's country, and the prime need is to administer the land in the interest of the native races and to help forward their development. Uganda has been the scene of an extraordinary development of Christianity ; nowhere else of recent times has missionary effort met with

such success. The inhabitants of the Dark Continent in their capacity for progress towards civilisation have made great strides, and the English officials have shown equal judgment and disinterestedness in the work they have done ; and they have been especially wise in trying to develop the natives along their own lines instead of seeking to turn them into imitation Englishmen. In Uganda all that is necessary is to go forward on the paths you have already marked out.

"The Sudan is peculiarly interesting because it affords the best possible example of the wisdom of disregarding the well-meaning but unwise sentimentalists who object to the spread of civilisation at the expense of savagery. I do not believe that in the whole world there is to be found any nook of territory which has shown such astonishing progress from the most hideous misery to well-being and prosperity as the Sudan has shown during the last twelve years while it has been under British rule. Up to that time it was independent and it governed itself, and independence and self-government in the hands of the Sudanese proved to be much what independence and self-government would have been in a wolf-pack.

"During a decade and a half, while Mahdism controlled the country, there flourished a tyranny which for cruelty, blood-thirstiness, unintelligence, and wanton destructiveness surpassed anything which a civilised people can even imagine. The keystones of the Mahdist Party were religious intolerance and slavery, with murder and the most abominable cruelty as the method of obtaining each. During these fifteen years at least two-thirds of the population—probably seven or eight millions of people—died by violence or by starvation. Then the English came in, put an end to the independence and self-government which had wrought this hideous evil, restored order, kept the peace, and gave to each individual a liberty which during the evil days of their own self-government not one human being possessed, save only the blood-stained tyrant who at the moment was ruler.

"I stopped at village after village in the Sudan, and in

many of them I was struck by the fact that while there were plenty of children they were all under twelve years old ; and inquiry always developed the fact that these children were known as 'Government children' because in the days of Mahdism it was the literal truth that in a very large proportion of the communities every child was either killed or died of starvation and hardship, whereas under the peace brought by English rule families are flourishing, men and women are no longer hunted to death, and the children are brought up under more favourable circumstances, for soul and body, than have ever previously obtained in the entire history of the Sudan.

"In administration, in education, in police work, the Sirdar and his lieutenants, great and small, have performed to perfection a task equally important and difficult. The Government officials, civil and military, who are responsible for this task, and the Egyptian and Sudanese who have worked with and under them, and as directed by them, have a claim upon all civilised mankind which should be heartily admitted.

"It would be a crime not to go on with the work—a work which the inhabitants themselves are helpless to perform, unless under firm and wise outside guidance. I have met some people who had some doubt as to whether the Sudan would pay. Personally I think it probably will. But I may add that, in my judgement, this fact does not alter the duty of England to stay there. It is not worth while belonging to a big nation unless a big nation is willing, when the necessity arises, to undertake a big task. I feel about you in the Sudan just as I felt about us in Panama. When we acquired the right to build the Panama Canal and entered on the task, there were worthy people who came to me and said they wondered whether it would pay. I always answered that it was one of the great world works, which had to be done ; that it was our business as a nation to do it, if we were ready to make good our claim to be treated as a great world power ; and that, as we were unwilling to abandon the claim, no American worth his salt ought to hesitate about

performing the task. I feel just the same way about you in the Sudan.

"Now as to Egypt. It would not be worth my while to speak to you at all, nor would it be worth your while to listen, unless on condition that I saw what I deeply feel ought to be said. I speak as an outsider, but in one way this is an advantage, for I speak without national prejudice. I would not talk to you about your own internal affairs here at home; but you are so very busy at home that I am not sure whether you realise just how things are—in some places at least—abroad. At any rate, it can do you no harm to hear the view of one who has actually been on the ground and has information at first hand; of one, moreover, who, it is true, is a sincere well-wisher of the British Empire, but who is not English by blood, and who is impelled to speak mainly because of his deep concern in the welfare of mankind and in the future of civilisation.

"Remember also that I who address you am not only an American, but a Radical, a real—not a mock—democrat, and that what I have to say is spoken chiefly because I am a democrat—a man who feels that his first thought is bound to be the welfare of the masses of mankind, and his first duty to war against violence, and injustice, and wrongdoing, wherever found, and I advise you only in accordance with the principles on which I have myself acted as American President in dealing with the Philippines.

"In Egypt you are not only the guardians of your own interests; you are also the guardians of the interests of civilisation, and the present condition of affairs in Egypt is a grave menace both to your Empire and to civilisation. You have given Egypt the best government it has had for at least two thousand years—probably a better government than it has ever had before; for never in history has the poor man in Egypt, the tiller of the soil, the ordinary labourer, been treated with as much justice and mercy, under a rule as free from corruption and brutality, as during the last twenty-eight years.

"Yet recent events, and especially what has happened in



connection with and following on the assassination of Boutros Pasha three months ago, have shown that in certain vital points you have erred, and it is for you to make good your error. It has been an error proceeding from the effort to do too much, and not too little, in the interests of the Egyptians themselves; but unfortunately it is necessary for all of us who have to do with uncivilised peoples, and especially with fanatical peoples, to remember that in such a situation as yours in Egypt weakness, timidity, and sentimentality may cause even more far-reaching harm than violence and injustice. Of all broken reeds, sentimentality is the most broken reed on which righteousness can lean.

"In Egypt you have been treating all religions with studied fairness and impartiality; and instead of gratefully acknowledging this, a noisy section of the native population takes advantage of what your good treatment has done to bring about an anti-foreign movement, a movement in which, as events have shown, murder on a large or a small scale is expected to play a leading part. Boutros Pasha was the best and most competent Egyptian official, a steadfast upholder of English rule, and an earnest worker for the welfare of his fellow-countrymen; and he was murdered simply and solely because of these facts, and because he did his duty wisely, fearlessly, and uprightly. The attitude of the so-called Egyptian Nationalist party, in connection with this murder, has shown that they were neither desirous nor capable of guaranteeing even that primary justice the failure to supply which makes self-government not merely an empty, but a noxious farce.

"Such are the conditions; and where the effort made by your officials to help the Egyptians towards self-government is taken advantage of by them, not to make things better, not to help their country, but to try to bring murderous chaos upon the land, then it becomes the primary duty of whoever is responsible for the government in Egypt to establish order, and to take whatever measures are necessary to that end.

"It was with this primary object of establishing order that

you went into Egypt twenty-eight years ago ; and the chief and ample justification for your presence in Egypt was this absolute necessity of order being established from without, coupled with your ability and willingness to establish it. Now, either you have the right to be in Egypt, or you have not ; either it is, or it is not, your duty to establish and keep order. If you feel that you have not the right to be in Egypt, if you do not wish to establish and keep order there—why, then, by all means get out of Egypt.

“ If, as I hope, you feel that your duty to civilised mankind and your fealty to your own great traditions alike bid you to stay, then make the fact and the name agree, and show that you are ready to meet in very deed the responsibility which is yours. It is the thing, not the form, which is vital ; if the present forms of government in Egypt, established by you in the hope that they would help the Egyptians upward, merely serve to provoke and permit disorder, then it is for you to alter the forms ; for if you stay in Egypt it is your first duty to keep order, and above all things else to punish murder, and to bring to justice all who directly or indirectly incite others to commit murder, or condone the crime when it is committed. When a people treats assassination as the corner-stone of self-government it forfeits all right to be treated as worthy of self-government.

“ You are in Egypt for several purposes, and among them one of the greatest is the benefit of the Egyptian people. You saved them from ruin by coming in ; and at the present moment, if they are not governed from outside, they will again sink into a welter of chaos. Some nation must govern Egypt. I hope and believe that you will decide that it is your duty to be that nation.”

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE RULERS AND MONUMENTS OF MEDIÆVAL CAIRO<sup>1</sup>

(Reprinted, by special permission of the author and the publishers, from Mr Stanley Lane-Poole's *The Story of Cairo*, in Messrs J. M. Dent & Co's *Mediæval Towns Series*.)

## 1. ARAB PERIOD

A.D.	A.H.			A.H.
640-808	20-254	Ninety-eight governors under caliphs of Damascus and Baghdād	†Mosque of 'Amr Town of the Tent (el-Fustāt) First Nilometer at er-Rōḍa Faubourg el-'Askar *Second Nilometer at er-Rōḍa	21 21 98 133 247

## 2. TURKISH PERIOD

### HOUSE OF ṬĪLŪN

868	254	Aḥmad ibn Ṭīlūn	Faubourg el-Ḳatāi' Palaces of el-Ḳatāi' Māristān *Mosque of Ibn-Ṭīlūn	256 256 ff. 259 263-5
883	270	Khumāraweyh b. Aḥmad	Palaces of el-Ḳatāi'	270 ff.
895	282	Geysh b. Khumāraweyh		
896	283	Hārūn b. Khumāraweyh		
904	292	Sheybān b. Aḥmad b. Ṭīlūn		

### CALIPHS' GOVERNORS

905-934 292-323 Thirteen governors

### HOUSE OF EL-IKHSHĪD

934	323	Moḥammad-el-Ikhsḥīd	Palace in Kāfūr's Garden and at Rōḍa	
946	334	Abū-l-Ḳāsim Ungūr b. el-Ikhsḥīd	Māristān at Fustāt	346
960	349	Abū-l-Ḥasan 'Aly b. el-Ikhsḥīd	Mosque of el-Gīza	350
966	355	Abū-l-Misk Kāfūr		
968	358	Abū-l-Fawāris Aḥmad b. 'Aly		

<sup>1</sup> Monuments still standing, or of which parts still remain, are distinguished by an asterisk. An obelus † indicates a restoration on the same site. b. stands for ibn (son).

## 3. FĀṬIMID PERIOD

A.D.	A.H.			A.H.
969	358	el-Mo'izz	Foundation of el-Kāhira Great East Palace, etc	358 358
			*Mosque el-Azhar	359
975	365	el-'Azīz	West Palace, etc.	
			*Mosque of el-Hākīm	380-403
996	386	el-Ḥākīm	Mosque of Rāshīda	393-5
			„ el-Maḥs	
1021	411	ez-Zāhir		
1036	427	el-Mustansir	*Mosque el-Guyūshy	478
			*Bāb - en - Nasr, *Bāb - el - Futūh, *Second wall,	
			*Bāb-Zuweyla	480-484
			Mosque of Nilometer	485
1094	487	el-Musta'ly		
1101	495	el-Āmir	*Mosque el-Akmar	519
			Several mesgids (Yānis, Kāfūry, Bāb-el-Khawkhā)	
			*Mihraḥs of Azhar and Sey- yida Ruḳeyya	
1131	524	el-Hāfiz		
1149	544	ez-Zāfir	†Mosque el-Afkhar	543
1154	549	el-Fāiz		
1160	555	el-'Āḍid	*Mosque of eṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalāi'	555

## 4. HOUSE OF SALADIN

1169	565	en-Nāsir Salāḥ-ed-dīn (Saladin) ibn Ayyūb	Mosque of Negm-ed-dīn Ayyūb	566
			College Nāṣiriya	566
			„ Kamḥiya	566
			„ Kuṭbiya	570
			„ Ibn-el-Arsūfy	570
			„ Suyūfiya	572
			Citadel and 3rd Wall begun	572
			Māristān	575
			College el-Fāḍiliya	580
1193	589	el-'Azīz, son of Saladin	Mosque of Ibn-el-Benā	c. 591
			College Ushkushiya	592
1198	595	el-Manṣūr b. el-'Azīz	„ Ghaznawīya	
1200	596	el-'Āḍil Seyf-ed-dīn	„ 'Adiliya	
			„ Sherifiya	612
1218	615	el-Kāmil b. el-'Āḍil	Restor. of M. of Shāfi'y	607
			*College Kāmiliya	622
			„ Fakhrīya	622
			Zāwiya Kaṣry	c. 633
			M. Ibn-esh-Sheykhy	c. 633
1238	635	el-'Āḍil II. b. el-Kāmil	College Ṣayramīya	c. 636
			„ Fāziya	636
1240	637	eṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb b. el- Kāmil	„ *Ṣāliḥīya	639
			Mosque, etc., of er-Rōḍa	
1249	647	el-Mu'azzam Tūrān- Shāh b. eṣ-Ṣāliḥ	Zāwiya Khaddām	647

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## 5. TURKISH MAMLŪKS

A.D.	A.H.			A.H.
1250	648	Queen Sheger-ed-durr	*Tomb of es-Sālih	648
1250	648	el-Mo'izz Aybek	College Kutbiya	650
			„ Sāhibiya	654
1257	655	el-Mansūr 'Aly b. Aybek		
1259	657	el-Muzaffar Kutuz		
1260	658	ez-Zāhir Beybars	*College Zāhiriya	660
			Meshhed el-Hoseyny	662
			College Megdiya	663
			Mosque el-Afram	663
			*Mosque ez-Zāhir	665
			College Muheddhibiya	
			„ Fārikāniya	676
1277	676	es-Sa'id Baraka b. Beybars		
1279	678	el-'Ādil Selāmish b. Beybars		
1279	679	el-Mansūr Kalā'un	*College Mansūriya and	
			Māristān Kalā'un	684
			Zāwiya el-Gemīzy	682
			„ el-Ga'bary	687
			„ el-Halāwy	683
			Convent el-Bundukdāriya	688
1290	689	el-Ashraf Khalil b. Kalā'un	*Gate from 'Akka	
1293	693	en-Nāsir Mohammad b. Kalā'un		
1294	694	el-'Ādil Ketbughā		
1296	696	el-Mansūr Lāgin	Restor. M. of Ibn-Ṭūlūn	696
			College Tafagiya	c. 698
			„ Mangūtūmuriya	698
1298	698	en-Nāsir, second reign	„ *Nāsiriya	699-703
			„ Karāsunkuriya	700
			„ Gemāliya	703
			Restor. of Hākim, Azhar,	
			Talāi'	703-4
			Mosque of Ṭaybars	707
1308	708	el-Muzaffar Beybars	*Convent of Beybars	706-9
		<i>Gāshnekiy</i>		
1309	709	en-Nāsir, third reign	*College Ṭaybarsiya	709
			Zāwiya of el-Hūmsy	709
			Mosque of el-Gāky	713
			*Citadel palace, aqueduct	713
			College Sa'idiya	715
			Convent of Arslān	c. 717
			*Mosque of Citadel	718
			*Mosque of emir Hoseyn	719
			*College Ālmelikiya	719
			*College Gāwaliya	723
			*Tomb of Ordūtegin	724
			*College Mihmandāriya	725
			„ Buktūmuriya	726
			Mosque of el-Khazāny	729
			„ *of Almās	730

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A.D. A.H. en-Nāṣir—*continued*.

			A.H.
		Mosque el-Barkiya	730
		„ *of Kūṣūn	730
		„ of Sārūgā	c. 730
		*College Akbughawīya	734
		*Tomb of Tāshṭimur	734
		*Palace of Beshtāk	c. 735
		*Convent of Kūṣūn	736
		„ at Siryākūs	736
		†Mosque of Beshtāk	736
		„ Aydemir	737
		„ et-Turkmāny	738
		„ *el-Māridāny	740
		„ *Sitta Miska	740
		„ Ibn-Ghāzy	741
1341	741	el-Mansūr Abū-Bekr	} sons of en-Nāṣir
1341	742	el-Ashraf Kuguk	
1342	742	en-Nāṣir Ahmad	
1342	743	eṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'il	
1345	746	el-Kāmil Sha'bān	
1346	747	el-Muẓaffar Ḥaggy	
1347	748	en-Nāṣir Ḥasan	
		Mosque of et-Tawāshy	745
		„ Ibn-et-Ṭabbākh	746
		„ *Kuguk	747
		„ †Akunkur	747
		„ †el-Ismā'ily	748
		„ *Kutlubugha	748
		„ el-Asyūty	c. 749
		*Convent of Umm-Anūk	c. 749
		„ Algibughā	c. 750
		*Mosque of Mangak	750
		„ *Sheykhū	750
		College el-Kharrūba	750
		*Cistern of Lāḡin	750
		College Kaysarāniya	751
		„ Ṣaghira	751
1351	752	eṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ b. Nāṣir	
1354	755	Ḥasan, second reign	
		*Convent of Sheykhū	756
		College Fārisiya	756
		„ *Ṣarghitmishiya	756
		„ *Sultān Ḥasan	757 ff.
		„ Bediriya	758
		„ *Ḥigāziya	761
		„ Beshiriya	761
		„ Ṣābiḳiya	763
1361	762	el-Mansūr Moḥammad	} grand-sons of en-Nāṣir
1363	764	el-Ashraf Sha'bān	
		*Tomb of Tulbiya	765
		*Mosque of Sha'bān	771
		*College Bublikriya (Asunbughā)	772
		*College of Gāy el-Yūsufy	775
		„ Bakriya	c. 775
		„ Ibn-'Irām	782
1376	778	el-Mansūr 'Alī b. Sha'bān	
1381	783	eṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ḥaggy b. Sha'bān (dep. 1382, restored 1389-90)	
		Tomb of Umm-Ṣāliḥ	783

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## 6. CIRCASSIAN MAMLÜKS

A.D.	A.H.			A.H.
1382	784	ez-Zāhir Barkūk [interrupted 791-2 by Häggy]	*Tomb of Anas *College of Aytmiş	783 785
			*College of Barkūk	788
			*Mosque of Zeyn-ed-din	790
			*College of Ināl <i>Ustāddār</i>	795
			„ Mahmūdiyya	797
			„ *Mukbil Zemāmiya	797
			„ Ibn-Ghurāb	798
1399	801	en-Nāsir Farag b. Bar- kūk	M. of Ibn-'Abd-ez-Zāhir	803
			*College of Sūdūn	804
			„ Mahally	c 806
1405	808	el-Mansūr 'Abd - el- 'Aziz b. Barkūk	*Convent and Tomb of Barkūk and Farag, and College of Farag	803-13
1405	809	Farag, second reign	*College of Gemāl-ed-din	811
			Mosque of Hōsh (Citadel)	812
1412	815	el-Musta'in (caliph)	„ Birket-er-Ratly	814
1412	815	el-Mu'ayyad Sheykh	M. of ed-Diwa (Citadel)	815
			Mosque of el-Bāsiṭy	817
			„ el-Hanafy	817
			„ ez-Zāhid	818
			*Māristān of el-Mu'ayyad	818
			*Mosque of el-Mu'ayyad	819-23
			*Coll. of 'Abd-el-Ghany	821
			Mosque of el-Fakhry	821
			*Coll. of Qādy 'Abd-el-Bāsiṭ	823
1421	824	el-Muzaḥfar Aḥmad b. Sheykh		
1421	824	ez-Zāhir Ṭaṭar		
1421	824	eş-Sālih Mohammad b. Ṭaṭar		
1422	825	el-Ashraf Bars-Bey	*College of Bars-Bey	827
			*Mosque of Gāny-Bek	830
			*College of Feyrüz	830
			*Conv. and tomb of Bars-Bey	835
1438	842	el-'Aziz Yūsuf b. Bars- Bey		
1438	842	ez-Zāhir Gaḳmaḳ	*College of Taghry-Berdy	844
			*Mosque of Kāny-Bey	845
1453	857	el-Manşūr 'Othmān b. Gaḳmaḳ	*M. and tomb Qādy Yaḥyā	848-50
			*Mosque of Gaḳmaḳ	853
1453	857	el-Ashraf Ināl	*Coll., Conv., tomb of Ināl	855-60
1461	865	el-Mu'ayyad Aḥmad b. Ināl		
1461	865	ez-Zāhir Khūshḳadam	*Tomb of Gāny-Bek	869
			*Mosque of Nūr-ed-din	870
			*Mosque of Sūdūn	c. 870
			*College of Qānim	c. 870
1467	872	ez-Zāhir Yel-Bey		
1467	872	ez-Zāhir Timurbughā		

# 382 Rulers and Monuments of Mediæval Cairo

A.D.	A.H.			A.H.
1468	873	el-Ashraf Kā'it-Bey	*Mosque of Timrāz	876
			*M. of Ezbek b. Tutush	880
			*Palace of Yeshbek	880
			*Kā'it-Bey's Coll. and tomb	879
			"    *Coll. in town	880
			"    *Wekāla by Azhar	882
			"    *Sebil	884
			"    Wekāla, B.en-Nasr	885
			*Wek., Surūgiya c.	885
			"    *Faḍawiya cupolac.	886
			"    *Palace and mckān	890
			"    *Restor. of S. gates	890
			"    *Coll. at er-Rōḍa	896
			*Mosque of Gānim	883
			*Coll. of Abū-Bekr b. Muzhūr	885
			*Mosque of Ḳagmās	886
			*Coll. of Ezbek el-Yūsufy	900
1496	901	en-Nāṣir Moḥammad b. Kā'it-Bey	*Palace of Mamāy (Beyt-el-Ḳādy)	901
1498	904	eẓ-Zāḥir Ḳānṣūh	*Tomb of Ḳānṣūh	904
1500	905	el-Ashraf Gānbalāt		
1501	906	el-'Ādil Tūmān-Bey		
1501	906	el-Ashraf Ḳānṣūh el-Ghūry	*Tomb el-'Ādil Tūmān-Bey	906
			*Mosque of Kheyr-Bek	908
			*Coll. Ḳāny-Bek emīr akhōr	908
			*Coll. of el-Ghūry	909
			†Tomb-mosque of el-Ghūry	909
			*Tomb of Sūdūn	c. 910
			*College of Ḳāny-Bek Ḳarā	911
			Restoration of aqueduct to Citadel	911
1516	922	el-Ashraf Tūmān-Bey		
1517	922	'OTHMĀNLY CONQUEST OF EGYPT		



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**HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.,**  
**LONDON AND AYLESBURY.**